



RESEARCH INTO SELF-HELP GROUPS AND SPEED SCHOOL GRADUATES' EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOLING

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

This report presents the details of a study on two aspects of Geneva Global Ethiopia's (GGE) Speed School Programme¹, namely the mothers' self-help group (SHG) programme, which aims to enable mothers to make enough money to cover the direct costs of schooling for the Speed School child to complete their primary schooling (Grade 8)², and Speed School graduates' experiences in the government Link School³. The three interrelated broad aims of the research were to explore:

- The operationalisation of the SHG programme;
- The links between mothers' participation in SHGs and children's participation in schooling;
- Speed School graduates' experiences in government Link Schools and factors that affect attendance, retention and learning outcomes.

Though not a primary focus, the study also offers insights into Speed School graduates' experiences in Speed Schools, and sheds light on broader operational issues within the Speed School programme. In turn, this qualitative study is part of a broader research programme on Speed Schools that includes a longitudinal tracking of a 2011 cohort of Speed School graduates as well as a study on Speed School Pedagogy.

Changes within GGE

During the one-year research period, major changes occurred within GGE: the appointment of a new director, an enlarged cadre of Programme Officers (POs), and revision of key programme documents. Interviews with senior GGE staff, held towards the end of the research period, indicated that various operational changes are already underway, and some of the issues highlighted in this study are already beginning to be addressed.

The research

The research was conducted in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), where GGE began its operations in 2011/2012⁴. It has been a collaborative endeavour between the Centre for International Education at the University of Sussex (UK) and the School of Education and Training at the University of Hawassa (Ethiopia). This entailed collaboration throughout the design, data collection, analysis and writing processes.

The study took place in four rural government Link Schools and communities across three woredas (Shebedino, Loka Abaya, and Silti) in two zones (Sidama and Silte) of SNNPR. Two sites in Shebedino involved focus SHGs from the programme's initial 2011/2012 cohort, and Speed School graduates in Grade 7. In Loka Abaya there were two focus SHG groups (2014/2015 and 2015/2016), as there was in Silti (2013/2014 and 2015/2016), and the students were from Grade 5. The aim was to capture SHGs at different stages of maturity. The communities in Shebedino and Loka Abaya were in almost exclusively Christian areas, whereas Silti was predominantly Muslim.

A case-study approach was adopted that employed predominantly ethnographic, qualitative research methods, which entailed repeated visits to the research sites, and both classroom and more general school observations. In order to gain multiple perspectives, researchers conducted group interviews

¹ It aims to help reintegrate out-of-school children (OOSCs) into the mainstream public education system after ten months of accelerated learning. The programme covers core areas of the national government curriculum for Grades 1–3, using an activity-based pedagogy designed to provide faster and more effective learning.

² Calculated at 70 Birr per annum.

³ Link Schools are government schools into which students transfer after the Speed School year; the case-study Link Schools in this study were hosting, or had previously hosted, Speed School classes on site.

⁴ Subsequently, it has expanded the programme to Tigray, Amhara and Oromia regions.

with the six focus SHGs, and with gender-segregated groups of the Speed School graduates⁵. Sixty-five individual interviews were held with a range of respondents: from schools (including Speed School graduates, teachers and principals), SHG participants, community members, government officers (at both kebele and woreda level), community mobilisers (CMs) and training officers (TOs) from GGE's implementing partners (IPs), as well as senior GGE personnel.

Ethical clearance was obtained from both participating universities and informed consent was sought from research participants.

The research instruments were piloted and adapted in advance of the main data-gathering period (Nov 2015–April 2016). Interviews were held in Amharic and/or in one of the local languages (Siltigna or Sidamu Afoo) with the assistance of translators, and were taped where permitted. Analysis was carried out in standardised analytical templates (categories were guided by research aims and questions and engagement with the relevant literature), which were piloted and amended after initial engagement with preliminary data.

Conceptual notes

Research design and analysis was guided by an understanding of school access as overlapping with school quality – being enrolled in school is pointless if students do not have access to meaningful learning opportunities. In turn, access is conceptualised as a dynamic process heavily dependent upon interactions among schools, communities and educational administration. Poverty too is conceived as multi-dimensional – related to material and social conditions – dynamic and gendered, affecting different women and men in different ways.

The sample and implications

Although some of the ordinary SHG members interviewed were clearly extremely poor, the committee members of the focus SHGs, though poor, were generally of higher socio-economic status, with greater access to resources. This has implications for how the results of this study should be interpreted. Similarly, half the 18 Speed School graduates interviewed individually were direct transfers from government school (not dropouts or non-entrants). Thus, while this study offers valuable insights into Link School students' and SHG members' experiences, it tells us less about the *most vulnerable* SHG members and the Speed School graduates and other students *most likely to be at risk of dropping out* from the Link Schools.

Other limitations

The findings reported are based on a specific sample within SNNPR and caution should be used in moving from the specific findings to broader generalisations, especially about other regions. In particular, it is worth noting that the three study woredas were in important cash crop areas, making it more likely that students will be absent and/or drop out to earn money than in areas where such paid work is not available. That said, the fact that some respondents had broader experiences of the programme and/or schools enables the study to offer insights that reach beyond the four case-study sites.

Logistical challenges, such as the absence of cell phone coverage and the distance and time to reach two of the four research sites, inevitably had an impact on access to respondents. Speed School graduates who had dropped out of the Link School, in particular are under-represented, and no female students were interviewed in one of the Shebedino schools.

The multi-lingual nature of the research sites (involving Siltigna or Sidamu-Afoo speakers) and differing levels of proficiency of both researchers (Amharic or English-speakers) and respondents in the various

⁵ Seven group interviews were conducted; one group interview with female Speed School graduates from one of the Shebedino schools was not held.

languages inevitably produced slippage in meanings.

Administrations of the case-study Link Schools were unable to provide complete and/or reliable school-level Education Management Information System (EMIS) data for the last four years for various reasons. Teachers were also reluctant to show attendance and performance data. Performance data were only provided in one school. The inaccessibility of reliable data also raises questions about the reliability of the data provided by schools to GGE for the tracking of Speed School graduates.

Findings: SHGS

Six focus SHG groups were studied in detail across the four sites (across three woredas) with supplementary basic information gathered about other groups from that year, and from other years of the programme's operation in the case-study sites.

SHG success seemed to depend on a variety of interlinked factors: the levels of support groups received both during and after the Speed School year; the degree of ownership they had in the investment; the amount of seed money received and the timing of its disbursement; the women's previous experience of business; their socio-economic status; the culture of the community; the levels of trust and commitment among group members; the expectations and geographical spread of the group members.

SHG support for schooling

In all four case-study sites SHG respondents reported that the groups helped to provide some income for them (in terms of savings or shares of seed money), even where the SHG itself collapsed. Some of this income was reportedly spent on basic necessities, some of which supported children's schooling either directly (books, stationery), or indirectly (food, clothing). However, unless the group or individual business is able to sustain itself the seed money and/or savings will run out.

The SHG programme was said to have started a culture of saving among some mothers who had either not considered saving before, or were unable to save before for financial reasons.

The fact that their children's education was reportedly often a focus of discussions in mothers' SHG meetings, which provide a forum for discussing any difficulties at school, may also have a positive impact on their children's persistence and success in formal education.

Status of SHGs

Although the programme experience was generally viewed positively by SHG participants – primarily for the education their children received at the Speed School – the majority of the SHGs in the case-study sites did not function collectively beyond the initial Speed School year. However, examples of successful businesses (generally individual or small-group enterprises) were given by GGE, IP and woreda repondents, though these were not independently verified.

At the time of the research, the Speed School programme design did not include systematic monitoring of SHGs beyond the Speed School year, or after the US\$500 seed money had been disbursed, if that occurred later.

The Silti case-study site appeared to be the most successful, where there is a strong tradition of female trading, a high-level of government support at the kebele level, including other SHGs and government development schemes, an active Parent Student Teacher Association (PSTA) and a kebele women's micro-finance officer on site. In addition, the community benefits from remittances from a few wealthy individuals from Saudi Arabia.

Financial support for children's schooling

The lack of success of most of the SHGs from the case-study sites suggest that SHGs may not provide the necessary income levels that could support the most economically vulnerable students. This, in part, may be due to the many operational challenges on the ground (detailed below) but also because the SHG programme, in its current form, does not take into account the indirect/opportunity costs of schooling (e.g. lost labour).

According to some GGE respondents, 70 Birr per annum is the amount calculated to cover the direct costs of a child's schooling – such as paying for learning materials – in a government school. No mention was made by GGE or IP respondents about the SHG revenue covering the opportunity costs of keeping the child in the Link School; these are likely to increase as the earning potential of the child for the family increases, especially for boys.

In addition, this estimation does not take into account the fact that many of the mothers are struggling to support other school-age children too, and that family finances are not necessarily divided out on a child-by-child basis; nor do women necessarily have full financial control of the money they earn.

Selection of SHGs

SHG membership was dictated by the selection of the Speed School children. Groups were formed of 25 mothers who agreed to their child's regular attendance at Speed School, and made a commitment to save. A couple of respondents voiced concerns that the latter requirement precludes the very poorest because they have no disposable income to save.

In all four case-study sites, and more broadly across the three study woredas, serious concerns were raised about the transparency and fairness of the Speed School student selection process: specifically, cases of nepotism, selection of underage students, and direct transfers from government schools. The programme's reputation for high quality education has made it a desirable alternative to public schooling, especially as it manages three years of schooling in one.

Committee members were nominated by members and elected by a show of hands, overseen by the facilitator and usually the CM. In the focus SHGs, committee members tended to be of higher socio-economic status than ordinary members.

Training & support

IP and SHG respondents reported a one-day woreda-level training, at most, for committee members and minimal, more ad-hoc support for SHG groups in general, well below the amount of training/support set out in the GGE SHG manual.

Woreda-level training is usually given when the seed money is released; when the release is delayed, so too is the training. The involvement of woreda officials in the training was valued by IP and GGE respondents despite the need to pay per diems for their attendance.

Ongoing IP support/training for the SHGs varied across the groups, but in general was inadequate and sporadic. In all six focus SHGs, it was the facilitator, rather than the CM, who attended meetings. CMs explained that they are not qualified/trained to give SHG support, and do not have time, as they support facilitators and Speed School classes across 20 sites. GGE recognises the issue and held a pilot specialised SHG training course for CMs in 2015/2016, which they are considering scaling up.

Meetings

Across the six focus groups, SHG meetings were held at different intervals, from “no serious meetings” to informal or formal weekly or monthly meetings, though savings may be collected more frequently.

Attendance registers were kept for four of the six focus SHGs, and sanctions were agreed on for late-coming and absenteeism, though it was not clear to what extent they were implemented.

Savings & investments

Across the four sites all groups managed some savings, either collectively or individually, but the extent to which groups and individuals managed to generate money through savings and seed money investments varied, even within year cohorts. Within the six focus SHG groups, results of collective investment were generally unfavourable, with one exception.

Although GGE & government emphasise collective endeavours with SHGs, members in the focus SHGs generally voiced a preference for individual investments; this was also a more widespread view among mothers, according to some IP and government respondents.

Seed money disbursement

The release of the seed money (US\$500) both in terms of timing and the number of disbursements, was another point of contention and debate, and whether to pay in kind or in cash (and via what means). These issues all had a bearing on the ability of the various SHGs to generate income. SHG members, both in the case-study sites and more broadly across the study woredas, preferred the money to be given at harvesting time (Nov–Jan), when prices are low, enabling them to sell later, when prices are high. IP and GGE respondents had mixed views, though there was a strong feeling that the mothers should demonstrate their commitment to saving before being given money, so as not to encourage dependency, or to discourage them from withdrawing their child from Speed School.

Delays with the micro-finance institution (MFI), where the seed money was deposited, also had a detrimental effect on the morale and functioning of some groups. Both GGE and IP respondents admitted that there were sometimes delays of one to three months before the MFI grants the SHG access to the funds, on account of their wanting to earn interest on the money deposited. In the most extreme case among the focus SHGs, one group had waited for almost two years from the group's formation for the money's release.

There was also an apparent lack of communication in some cases between the IP and the SHGs regarding financial issues (such as seed money and expenses), which could cause tension between SHGs and the IPs, or between ordinary SHG members and the committee.

Group dynamics

Having large SHG groups of 25 coming from different gotts/villages and from different social backgrounds meant there was sometimes a lack of intra-group homogeneity – in socio-economic status, for example – a lack of trust, and difficulty getting everyone together for meetings. To address the issue, smaller gott-level sub-groups of five were being formed in some locations, which IP and government respondents agreed were more successful.

Success and sustainability

Across respondents, it was emphasised that for SHGs to succeed, it is crucial that they receive high-quality, relevant, intensive support, follow-up for at least a year after the Speed School Year, and a planned phase-out – none of which was occurring at the case-study sites at the time of the research.

Other desirable features for successful and sustainable SHGs, identified by a range of respondents, included: smaller gott-level groups; business plans aligned to particular contexts; adequate start-up capital within the group; trained grassroots facilitators to support SHGs locally; specialist-trained CMs; greater kebele involvement, including a kebele MFI; greater involvement of all SHG members (not just the committee) in managing the group; and greater transparency in book-keeping.

Attitudes to schooling

Although some GGE, IP and government officials questioned the attitude of some mothers towards education, all the SHG interviewees, as well as the mothers of the Speed School graduate interviewees, clearly already had a positive attitude towards education since they had other children who had been to school at some stage, even if they had dropped out.

Speed School graduates' experiences of Link Schools

In all four case-study sites all Speed School graduates reported that their Speed School experiences had been very positive, and for some life-changing. Their praise for the Speed School was often contrasted with their current, less favourable learning experiences in the Link School and their learning experiences prior to Speed School, often in the same Link School.

In Speed School

The Speed School graduates interviewed felt that they had learned *how* to learn, and that this, together with what they had learned in Speed School, was making it easy for them to do well in the Link School.

Features of Speed School learning that helped their learning in the Link School included:

- Facilitator professionalism in attendance, punctuality and care for the individual;
- Strict but encouraging facilitator-student relations;
- Multi-lingual teaching, using some Amharic and English, but above all, the local language to ensure all students understand;
- Learning the whole day – though this was also said to put off some parents/guardians from allowing their child to attend in the first place;
- Constant repetition and frequent revision until all understand;
- Participatory, interactive teaching methodology, involving practical activities, visual aids, group and pair work, songs, craft work;
- Focus on study skills and reading skills;
- Student encouragement, boosting their self-confidence and motivation with regard to their learning.

Transition to Link Schools

Some Speed School graduates reported experiencing no difficulties in making the transition; others had some difficulties, such as the large classes, the shorter school day, constant note-taking, classroom disturbances by late-coming students, teasing by other students. Most difficulties were said to be short-lived.

Link Schools

Many Speed School graduates in the case-study sites, and more generally across the study woredas, were said to be persisting in the Link Schools, participating well both in class (where given the opportunity) and attaining well in tests. Reliable school attendance and performance data were not readily available in the case-study schools to give further weight to these assertions.

Conditions were very different across the Link Schools. However, in all cases, conditions for effective learning were challenging to various degrees. In broad terms, where the interaction between school, community and local government was strongest – in Teff – conditions for graduates to remain in school and continue to learn were more favourable.

Threats to Speed School graduates (and other students') retention and learning in Link Schools

The ability of Speed School graduates (and other students) to persist in the Link School and continue to make academic progress primarily depended on the family's ability to continue to support the student's schooling financially, and the income-generating opportunities available (direct and

opportunity costs of schooling), and on the quality of schooling available. Thus, out-of-school and in-school factors interacted in dynamic ways.

Effective community support, such as via an active Parent Student Teacher Association (PSTA) or Kebele Education Training Board (KETB), as exemplified in the Silti school kebele, could mitigate these threats to some extent. When describing the latter, in particular, respondents generally talked about students and/or young people in general, not necessarily only Speed School graduates.

Out-of-school factors

Poverty was identified as an issue in all four sites, and more generally across the woredas, which could result in non-enrolment, late coming, absenteeism, poor learning, grade repetition and dropout. However, responses to poverty depended heavily on the income-earning opportunities available, which varied across the sites, three of which are located in major cash-crop areas, for *khat*, coffee and *teff*, in particular.

Students in all schools across the focus woredas, including Speed School graduates, combined schooling and paid work and/or unpaid family work. Better paid work was more generally available for older boys, though in Silti woreda, girls in particular were involved in trading.

Absenteeism was reported to be higher on market days in three sites (which classroom observations confirmed), which was said to be the case more generally across the study woredas. Absenteeism was also high at harvest time.

The following out-of-school factors reportedly affected school attendance, retention and/or learning in the case-study schools, and in the study kebeles or woredas more generally:

- Involvement in household chores, which tended to affect girls more;
- Economic migration: to urban areas; to Saudi Arabia (in Silti); to find water for livestock in times of water scarcity (in Loka Abaya);
- Peer pressure to drop out when peers were earning good money and those in school were not. Students from poor families, especially girls, feel pressure to earn money to buy clothes and accessories to look as nice as contemporaries with more disposable income.
- The negative or indifferent attitude towards formal schooling: the value of schooling was said to be questioned by some families, both on account of the availability of paid work from trading, or, conversely, the lack of jobs for school graduates.
- Early marriage was a widespread concern for girls; pregnancy and fear of abduction were mentioned by a few.
- Illness was highlighted in two schools, and lack of food and hunger were a concern in one school.

In-school factors

More specifically, the quality of schooling depended on the school context, available resources, the quality of school leadership and management, levels of support offered by the community and the woreda/kebele, and their interaction with school management; teacher commitment and pedagogy; teacher supervision and support; and class size.

Despite students' preference for interactive and participatory classes in the Speed School, they were generally fairly accepting of the more traditional teaching methods in the Link School, involving being lectured at and a lot of copying from the board.

However, the Speed School graduates interviewed were dissatisfied with the following features of Link Schools, which are likely to impede their continued progress and motivation – and which interview

and observational data indicate occurred to differing degrees across the case-study sites, and more generally across the study wordas:

- Widespread teacher absenteeism and late coming;
- Inadequate resources, including textbooks;
- A generally unstimulating classroom environment;
- Lack of commitment among some teachers;
- Poor curriculum coverage (as a result of fewer classes being held);
- Ineffective pedagogy, including insufficient use of the local language, inadequate explanations and a lack of revision (though with a few exceptions);
- Student late coming and absenteeism, causing class disturbances;
- Class disturbances by other students when teachers were absent;
- Limited access to the library and/or insufficient library books;
- Certain disciplinary practices;
- Not setting and/or marking homework or classwork;
- High teacher turnover in one school;

Conclusions and recommendations

We make the following recommendations regarding the SHG and Link School capacity-building programmes, in the knowledge that GGE is already considering or even beginning to implement some of these and making other changes to improve the programme.

General issues

For both SHG and Link School improvement programmes there should be flexible programme designs that take into account contextual differences among regions and wordas.

GGE should continue to hold regular meetings with IPs (such as the one initiated in 2015/2016) to aid programme improvement.

Written guidelines need to be produced by GGE to guide all parties towards more achievable aims, outcome objectives, responsibilities, job descriptions and timelines, against which performance of IPs and SHGs can be measured. These need to dovetail with the new M&E criteria being developed by GGE.

Regular, systematic M&E of the SHGs and Link School support programme needs to be fully integrated into the programme and carried out by POs, in addition to the ongoing monitoring by the IPs. It should also include some independent monitoring, which focuses on the quality and not just the quantity of deliverables (e.g. training sessions), and includes some interviews with participants. This would require additional funding.

Geneva Global should consider increasing the number of POs – perhaps appointing region-specific POs, in addition to the new M&E and SHG specialists, to enable them to dedicate more time to monitoring the quality of training and support offered by IPs and school principals, to SHGs and school teachers, offering support themselves where necessary.

Both SHGs and Speed School graduates should be tracked after the initial year, which would need to be budgeted for and included in the M&E strategy. Ways of independently verifying data provided by schools/groups or IPs need to be devised since inaccurate data may impede schools, IPs and GGE from identifying students who are at risk of dropping out.

As the revised 2016 Speed School Quality Guide and senior GGE staff emphasised, deeper engagement with government is required so that a planned, formalised, timetabled phase-out for both the SHG and

Link School capacity development programmes can be negotiated with relevant government departments, including signed (memorandum of understanding) MOUs, to ensure sustainability.

More specific recommendations are made below, under two possible scenarios: one assuming that the SHG programme is retained; and another that assumes that funds and energies are diverted elsewhere, particularly towards the Link School capacity development programme.

Scenario A: Continuing with the SHG programme

There is strong evidence across the case-study sites and the focus woredas, more generally, to suggest that major changes need to be made to the SHG programme for it to function more effectively, which would have major budgetary implications.

- The SHGs should be supported by GGE for *at least* one year after the Speed School year, preferably longer, and SHGs should be tracked in terms of membership, inputs, investments, savings and expenditures.
- Improved communication is needed between the IP and the SHGs to ensure that the groups are aware of exactly what support they are entitled to, when, for how long, and who is to give it, to minimise misunderstandings.
- Specialised CMs with experience in SHGs and MF should be appointed and provided with the relevant specialised training (including regular CPD) by GGE – outsourced if necessary – to enable them to support the SHGs fully. These specialised CMs should be under the direction of the new SHG coordinator in GGE.
- GGE should also consider appointing regional SHG coordinators, who would work with the GGE SHG coordinator and the GGE staff member in charge of M&E as well as with the IPs with respect to the SHG CMs.
- SHG CMs need to be allocated a manageable number of SHGs to work with and adequate transport, taking into account the geographical area and terrain to be covered.
- All SHG members, not just the committee members, need intensive and regular support at all stages, which should include specific needs-based skills training on saving, book-keeping, budgeting etc., to be negotiated in consultation with the SHGs themselves.
- Training of all SHG members is necessary, not only to enable all mothers to benefit equally from the programme, but also to help minimise any antagonism between committee and ordinary members; rotating office bearers might also help in this regard.
- Kebele-level or alternative cluster meetings should be convened once the groups have been formed at the beginning of the year, including relevant woreda officials, to ensure all parties are aware of their various roles, responsibilities, timelines and expected outcomes and to affirm mutual commitment to the project.
- Greater involvement of woreda officials, the Link School principal and the facilitator, as well as religious leaders, is recommended in the selection process to make it more transparent and fair. However, since the backing and involvement of kebele officials is also crucial to the success of the programme, there may need to be a degree of trade-off between accepting that a certain number of Speed School places may be taken by children who would otherwise not be eligible, in return for longer-term and broader benefits to the programme.
- Relevant woreda/kebele officers should also be involved in SHG training sessions where appropriate, with prior agreement on budgeting.
- More flexibility is needed in SHG formation – allowing for smaller groups, preferably from the same gott/village, which, we gather is now happening in some areas. For example, with several Speed School sites (classes) in one school, or within the kebele, mothers could group across sites according to their gott/village.
- The SHGs should decide whether to have payment in cash or in kind, under advice from IPs where necessary.

- Election of officers, agreement on meetings, savings, regulations and an agreed business idea approved by the CM and lodged with the IP should all be completed before any payment is made. The group should also have made some savings.
- That said, efforts should be made to ensure the SHGs can access the seed money at a time of year that allows the groups to benefit from low prices.
- Systems will need to be put in place that address any extra child or animal care arrangements (such as group childcare) arising from mothers' participation in SHGs that could result in other children assuming extra burdens of work.
- GGE should consider making the seed money payment through the IP, thereby avoiding the delays with the MFI, though an account would still be opened with the MFI in which to deposit SHG savings, and subsequent profit from the businesses.
- SHGs should have both group and individual accounts books that can be cross-checked to help resolve trust issues between committee and ordinary members.
- Group saving could lead to group or individual investment with appropriate support.
- SHG travel expenses and lunch need to be budgeted for; while it may be neither desirable or feasible to give per diems to SHG members to attend training, or to travel to the woreda town to withdraw money, it is unrealistic to expect very poor women to pay for transport costs out of their savings.

Scenario B: Alternatives to SHGs

For Speed School graduates from very poor backgrounds to be able to persist in the Link School they need continued economic support, either from the profits of more effective SHGs, or from other sources, which would need to cover both the opportunity and direct costs of schooling and take into account household financial decision-making processes.

- UCTs or CCTs could play a part in this.
- Profits from the Link School's IGAs could be directed towards providing lunch and/or learning materials for the most needy students, as is being practised in one of the case-study Link Schools.
- GGE needs to work together with schools, woreda officials and local-level organisations, such as the PSTA and KETB, and parents/guardians on a whole-school approach to help improve the quality of education in the Link Schools.
- Specifically, GGE, IPs and woreda officials should work together to develop a long-term, ongoing teacher development programme that builds on collaboration and skills sharing between Speed Schools and Link Schools – through action research, peer observation (as in the Silti school) and idea-sharing, for example – with regular, intensive inputs from IPs, overseen by GGE POs.
- Full use should be made of former facilitators who are now government teachers because they come with training and experience of Speed School pedagogy. They can help strengthen the quality of teaching and learning in the Link Schools.
- Greater involvement of the PSTA and KETB is desirable to monitor and address teacher professionalism and student attendance.
- Initial training and support need to be provided to school principals, vice-principals and school supervisors to enable them to support teachers in implementing aspects of Speed School pedagogy in the classroom. This could be done by GGE POs, perhaps in collaboration with teacher education colleges or university education departments.
- School principals, vice-principals and teachers would need long-term incentives agreed on by government (e.g. links to further training/certification and or promotion) to encourage participation in this school-based development.

Whichever scenario is chosen, unless the quality of government schooling improves, gains made in the Speed Schools are likely to be lost in the long-term. In this regard, strengthening the Link School capacity development programme would seem to be crucial.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

AAGR	Annual Aggregate Growth Rate
ABE	Alternative Basic Education
BoWYCA	Bureau of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs
CT	Cash transfer
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CM	Community mobiliser
CMC	Community Management Committee
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
CSO	Civil society organisation
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Program
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan
FGM	Female genital modification
FMoE	Federal Ministry of Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio/Rate
GG	Geneva Global
GGE	Geneva Global Ethiopia
GPI	Gender Parity Index
IGA	Income-generating activity
IP	Implementing partner
KETB	Kebele Education and Training Board
MESDA	Micro and Small-scale Enterprises Development Agency
MOI	Medium of instruction
MoWCYA	Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs
NLA	National Learning Assessment
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio/Rate
NGO	Non-government organisation
OMFI	Omo Microfinance Institution
OOSC	Out-of-school children
PO	Programme officer
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Examination
PSNP	Productive Safety Nets Programme
PSTA	Parent Student Teacher Association
PTR	Pupil-teacher ratio
REB	Regional Education Bureau
RoSCA	Rotating savings and credit association
SHG	Self-help group
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SNE	Special Needs Education
TO	Training officer
UCT	Unconditional cash transfer
WEO	Woreda Education Office

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GLOSSARY

Astedader	chartered city – referring to the two city administrations of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa
Bajaj	motorised tricycle
Birr	Birr – Ethiopian currency; around ETB 22 = USD1 at the time of the research
<i>Enset</i>	also known as false banana, it is Ethiopia's main root crop, though the fruit is inedible.
<i>Equb</i>	traditional rotating savings and credit association
Gott	village
Homeroom teacher	class teacher
Iddir	traditional savings group for funeral expenses and to help with other bereavement costs
Injera	the national dish of Ethiopia, a spongy sourdough flatbread made of teff (see below) or sorghum
Kebele	the smallest government administrative unit, similar to a ward
<i>Khat</i>	mildly addictive indigenous shrub grown as a stimulant, causing mild euphoria and excitement when chewed
Kilil	Amharic word for regional state
<i>Teff</i>	Ethiopia's staple cereal
Woreda	local government administrative district, comprising several kebeles (see above)
Zone	second-level administrative area, comprising numerous woredas
Region	first-level administrative area within Ethiopia, comprising several zones

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The Geneva Global Speed School programme has been operational in Ethiopia since 2011/2012. It aims to provide an opportunity for out-of-school children (OOSCs) – an estimated 3.7 million children and adolescents at the last count (www.uis.unesco.org) – to reintegrate into the mainstream public education system after ten months of accelerated learning, which covers the core areas of the national government curriculum for Grades 1–3 within that period. The Speed School activity-based approach to pedagogy seeks not only to provide faster learning, but also more effective learning. Although Speed School students are assessed continuously, at the end of the year in the Speed School, children are given a standardised placement test, allowing them to be transferred the following year to the relevant grade (usually 3 or 4) of the government school to which the Speed School is affiliated – hereafter referred to as Link Schools.

The four interventions that comprise the Speed School programme outlined in the original *Speed School Quality Guide* relate to:

- Ten months of Speed School classes;
- Mothers' self-help groups;
- Primary school capacity development;
- Pre-school. (GGE, 2011)

Thus, in addition to the accelerated learning classes, the Speed School Programme aims to encourage mothers of children enrolled in Speed Schools to save collectively in SHGs. At the same time, the programme provides financial skills training and seed money, to help the mothers to increase their household income and help minimise their dependence on child labour. The twin assumptions behind the SHGs are that poverty is a major factor threatening participation in education, and that some mothers do not value formal education, or prioritise other activities for their children over education. Participation in SHGs is therefore expected to guarantee that mothers maintain positive attitudes towards schooling and ensure that their child attends classes regularly. The presumed improved financial rewards from the mothers' participation in the SHG should enable them financially to keep their children in school beyond the initial Speed School year.

In order to support the transition of Speed School graduates to the Link School, where the pedagogy is dominated more by 'chalk-and-talk' and rote learning, the programme provides some measure of teacher development support to the Link School teachers, to expose them to more activity-based learning methodology (see Chapter 3 Section 3.7, *Limitations of the research*)

Around a quarter of Grade 1 children in Ethiopia fail to make it past the first year of schooling (UNESCO, 2015). To help address this issue, the final strand of the programme provides pre-school support, establishing a system of peer-teaching, modelled on the UNICEF Child-to-Child approach, whereby older, high-attaining children teach children aged 3–6 the basic alphabet and numbers. This helps to prepare the younger children for entry into school, making them more 'school-ready', and less likely to drop out in the first grade.

The Geneva Global Speed School initiative in Ethiopia started operations in SNNPR in 2011/2012. Subsequently, it has expanded the programme to Tigray, Amhara and Oromia regions. For the initial Speed School cohorts, both children who had dropped out of school and those who had never been to school were targeted. At the time of this research, the focus was children aged 9–14 who had never been to school, with the emphasis on targeting the poorest families, and ensuring equal numbers of girls and boys.

1.1. Purpose of the study

The overarching issue addressed by this evaluation of the Speed School programme, as outlined in the inception report, “is whether it can provide a sustainable route back into education for out-of-school children.” (Akyeampong, 2015: 2). As an important part of the research, this particular study has three interrelated broad aims, namely to explore:

- The operationalisation of the SHG programme;
- The links between mothers’ participation in SHGs and children’s participation in schooling;
- Speed School graduates’ experiences in government Link Schools and factors that affect attendance, retention and learning outcomes.

The more detailed research questions are outlined in Chapter 3.

Although the focus is on Speed School graduates’ experiences in the Link Schools, the study also offers insights into their experiences in Speed Schools. In addition, the findings shed light on broader operational issues within the Speed School programme.

Both strands of this study – regarding the operationalization of SHGs and the Speed School graduates’ experiences of Link Schools – took place in four schools and communities across three woredas (Shebedino, Loka Abaya, and Silti) in two zones (Sidama and Silte) of SNNPR. A case-study approach was adopted that employed predominantly ethnographic, qualitative research methods, which entailed numerous visits to the research sites. In order to gain multiple perspectives, researchers engaged with a range of respondents from schools, communities, government and Geneva Global’s IPs, as well as interviews with senior GGE personnel. Importantly, some of these respondents had experiences of the programme that were broader than the four Link Schools, enabling the study to offer insights that reach beyond the four case-study sites. Further details are in Chapter 3. In turn, this qualitative study is part of a broader research programme on Speed Schools that includes a longitudinal tracking of a 2011 cohort of Speed School graduates (Akyeampong *et al.*, 2018) as well as a study on Speed School pedagogy (Akyeampong *et al.*, 2016a and b).

1.2 Research team

The core research team comprised three researchers: two from the University of Hawassa (one female, one male) and one female researcher from the University of Sussex. Since the first language of both Hawassa researchers was Amharic, and that of the Sussex researcher was English, four interpreters worked with the team to cover the two local languages of the case-study sites: two Siltigna speakers (one female, one male) and two Sidamu Afoo speakers (one female, one male). The interpreters were all practising primary school teachers or principals in the same zones as the case-study sites who were also studying in the education department at the University of Hawassa.

1.3. Background to SNNPR

SNNPR covers ten percent of Ethiopia’s geographical area and is home to a fifth of the country’s population, around 15 million according to the last census (CSA, 2008), which was projected to grow to around 18 million by 2015 (see csa.gov.et). SNNPR is multi-religious and the most ethnically and linguistically diverse of Ethiopia’s regional states, counting 56 nations and languages (Semela *et al.*, 2015). There are therefore considerable differences among the populations of the region’s 14 zones (plus four special woredas and a city administration) as well as within the zones across over 130 woredas. As Table 1.1 illustrates, while predominantly Christian (Protestant 55.5%; Orthodox 19.9%; Catholic 2.4%), the state has a substantial Muslim minority (14.1%) and a small percentage that practises traditional religion (6.6%) (CSA, 2008). In terms of peoples, the Sidama constitute the region’s majority population, at just under 20%, inhabiting predominantly the Sidama Zone, one of the two zones included in the study, followed by the Wolayita and Hadiya peoples. According to the 2011 household survey (CSA & ICF International, 2012), literacy rates are better than the national averages for both women and men, but still quite low. For men aged 15–49 in SNNPR, around 65% are said to

be literate, but since that includes both those with secondary education or higher and those who can only read part of a sentence, functional literacy rates will be much lower. Similarly, just under a third of women are said to be literate (31%), but again the actual percentage of women who are functionally literate will be much lower.

Table 1. 1 SNNPR population in Sidama and Silte zones by location, ethnicity and religion

	Population*	Urban %	Ethnicity %	Religion
SNNPR	14,930,000	10.0	Sidama (19.4) Wolayta (10.6) Hadiya (8.0)	Protestant (55.5%) Muslim (14.1) Traditional (6.6%)
Sidama Zone	2,954,000	5.5	Sidama (93.0) Wolayta (0.8) Silte (0.2)	Protestant (84.4) Muslim (4.6) Orthodox (3.3)
Silte Zone	750,000	6.0	Silte (97.0) Amhara (0.9) Gurage (0.6)	Muslim (97.6) Orthodox (2.0)

Source: SNNPR 2007 census tables at www.csa.gov.et.

The region's landscape is equally varied, with highlands, lowlands and the generally fertile midlands, which constitute the most densely populated rural areas in the country (USAID, 2005; Doilicho, 2007). Consequently, a range of crops is grown, including *enset* (false banana), the staple diet for much of the region, other root crops and various cereals. Coffee is the main cash crop, with ginger, chilli peppers and *khat* also important for generating income (*ibid.*). Since the region is densely populated, land plots are generally small. However, on average, SNNPR enjoys relatively high rainfall compared to some other areas in the country and is therefore not as drought and food insecure as some of Ethiopia's northern and eastern regions though there are times of scarcity (USAID, 2005). That said, malnutrition and food insecurity is an issue among many adults and children: the latest mini household survey indicated that 12% of the region's population participate in the Productive Safety Nets Programme (PSNP) and 44% of children under five are stunted (above the national average), 7% wasted and 26% underweight (CSA, 2014). A study in Sidama Zone also reported high levels of food insecurity (Regassa and Stoeckler, 2011). According to the region's health profile, SNNPR has the lowest health indicators in the country, compounded by low access to health services. The leading causes of mortality and morbidity are mostly due to lack of clean drinking water, poor sanitation, low public awareness of nutrition, environmental health and personal hygiene practices (snnprhb.gov.et). Malaria is also prevalent in about 60–70% of the region while HIV and tuberculosis also pose serious health threats (*ibid.*). There are a substantial number of orphans in the region; the last census estimated that almost 10% of young people under 18 had lost one or both parents (CSA, 2008), while a more recent study on a slightly older demographic (aged 12–24) found that 25% of males and 29% of females had lost one or both parents (Erulkar *et al.*, 2010).

Education

Primary and secondary education in SNNPR, as elsewhere in Ethiopia, is in two cycles. The first primary cycle comprises Grades 1–4, the second cycle Grades 5–8. Secondary education is divided into lower secondary (Grades 9 and 10) and upper secondary (Grades 11 and 12). At the end of Grade 8, the regional Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLE) is taken, the results of which determine who is eligible to enter lower secondary school.

On account of the large populations involved, most schools operate a double-shift system, with lessons for the first shift taking place between 7.30am and midday, and the afternoon shift running from 12.30 to 5pm. The school year comprises two semesters: the first starts in September and finishes in January; the second runs from February to the end of June.

Given SNNPR's linguistic heterogeneity, thirteen of the region's local languages are officially sanctioned as 'mother-tongue' medium of instruction (MOI) for Grades 1–4, with the exception of the regional capital, Hawassa, where the MOI is Amharic. However, this means that many minority language speakers do not get to learn in their mother tongue. During the first primary cycle, Amharic and English are taught as subjects. From Grade 5 English is the MOI throughout the region, though the local language and Amharic continue to be taught as subjects. Needless to say, the practice is more varied than the policy (see Chapter 2, Section 2.8 on *Medium of instruction*). The MOI for the case study schools are Sidamu Afoo, for the Sidama sites, and Siltigna for the Silte site.

Table 1. 2 Trends in primary education statistics for SNNPR 2009/10 – 2013/14 (E.C. 2002–2006)

	2009–2010			2010–2011			2011–2012			2012–2013			2013–2014		
	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T
GER	91.3	103.5	97.4	96.5	110	103.3	96.4	107.1	101.8	93.5	104	98.7	95.6	106.1	100.8
NER	82.8	91.7	87.2	87.2	97.4	92.3	87.8	96.0	90.9	86.2	94.7	90.4	89.0	97.6	93.3
Repetition*	10.7	11.3	11.0	10.7	10.7	10.7	9.4	8.7	9.0	9.0	7.4	8.2	--	--	--
Dropout*	14.5	13.3	13.8	17.2	18.8	18.0	21.3	20.4	20.8	16.5	16.3	16.4	--	--	--
Survival to Grade 5	59.5	58.9	59.2	65.0	64.7	64.8	59.6	59.2	59.4	53.1	54.0	53.6	50.3	52.0	51.2
Survival to Grade 8	41.5	40.6	41.0	44.7	43.8	44.2	40.2	40.5	40.4	34.6	35.6	35.1	33.0	35.2	34.1
Qualified** Teachers %	36.7	43.4	41.5	41.8	46.9	45.5	50.3	51.4	51.1	59.3	56.0	60.0	60.0	55.2	56.6
GPI	0.88			0.88			0.90			0.90			0.90		
PTR	1:60			1:59			1:57			1:54			1:51		

Source: *Education Statistics Annual Abstract 2013/2014* (2006 E.C)

*Figures for 2013–2014 not available

** Diploma or above

Following national trends, SNNPR's school enrolments have been increasing for both girls and boys, according to regional EMIS data. Table 1.2 shows the five-year regional trends for primary education from 2009/2010 – 2013/2014 (E.C. 2002–2006). Enrolments have increased overall over the period, showing an Aggregate Annual Growth Rate (AAGR) of 3.8%, higher for girls (4.1%) than for boys (3.6%), with the gender gap closing slightly from 0.88 to 90.0. In actual numbers this equates to approximately 4 million students in primary school, two-thirds of which are in Grades 1–4. The increasing demand for schooling has led to an AAGR of 5% in the number of primary schools; there are now just under 6,000 in the region. Although far fewer students make the transition to secondary education – around 400,000 were enrolled in 2013–2014 – growth in secondary student numbers stands at 7.8% over the five-year period: 12.9% for female students and 4.4% for male students, although there are still greater numbers of boys enrolled than girls. This increase in secondary enrolment is no doubt related to some degree to the proliferation of secondary schools, which have almost doubled in number over the five years, now totalling 415, from 228 (government 373: non-government 42).

As with all enrolment figures, however, they should be treated with caution, given the acknowledged tendency for mistakes to be made at various stages of both data gathering and processing (Federal Ministry of Education (FMoE), 2015), and the possibility of inflated enrolment figures – something the Federal Ministry of Education recognises (FMoE & UNICEF, 2012).

Although enrolment rates have increased, primary-level dropout rates have also increased for both female and male students, with the latest available figures indicating around 16% of students dropping out. Survival rates similarly are decreasing with only around half the students now making it to Grade 5, the beginning of the second cycle, and only just over a third surviving to Grade 8. Whereas female students stood a slightly better chance of completion in 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 to both Grades 5 and 8, that trend seems to have reversed, with male students now being slightly more likely to

complete. On the other hand, repetition rates (which include re-admittances – those who drop out temporarily and re-join the following year) have declined slightly overall and now stand at 8% (girls 9%, boys 7.4%). Grade 8 is the most commonly repeated grade since students who wish to re-sit the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLE), have to repeat the grade. Though percentages of overage students are generally dropping in Ethiopia, SNNPR still has a substantial number of students who start late and/or are overage (Akyeampong, 2015), which increases the likelihood of their dropping out later (Hunt, 2008). Similarly, many students who are enrolled in school, do not attend class regularly, which is also likely to lead to eventual dropout (Ananga, 2011).

Despite increases in enrolment, there remain a high number of children and young adults out of school. Using 2009/2010 EMIS data, the 2010 report estimated that around 12.3% (440, 000) children of primary-age were out of school in SNNPR, whereas combined DHS and UNPD data suggest a much higher percentage (MoE & UNICEF, 2012).

As Table 1.3 indicates, the percentage of qualified teachers in SNNPR, has been increasing and the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) has been decreasing. However, school quality remains a major concern across the country and national learning assessments show deteriorating trends in student attainment (FMOE, 2010). As the FMOE points out: “The gains in access are of little meaning if they are not accompanied by improved student learning” (*ibid*:10). This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Sidama Zone

Sidama Zone lies at the very east of the region (see Figure 1.1). It encloses the regional capital, Hawassa, and is itself almost totally encircled by the Oromia Region to the north, east and south. It comprises nineteen woredas, including Shebedino and Loka Abaya, where two of the case-study schools are located. As shown in Table 1.1, Sidama Zone has a fifth of SNNPR’s total population at just under 3 million, of whom over 90% are Sidama, with Sidamu Afoo their first language. It is one of the most densely populated areas with some woredas home to over 500 persons/km² (Doilicho, 2007). The majority of the population are Protestant and a significant number of households are polygamous – 15% according to one recent survey (Regassa and Stoeckler, 2011). Sidama is also the Ethiopia’s most important coffee-producing region, so coffee is inevitably the staple cash crop in the midlands and highlands, though the zone also includes lowland areas, where maize is the major cash crop, with chilli peppers, *khat* and coffee also generating income; some sweet potato, haricot beans and *teff* are also grown. The coffee-harvesting season, which attracts seasonal migrant labour, is from November to January. In the midland areas, where there are considerable wealth disparities, many of the better off farms grow coffee and own substantial cattle; poorer families own goats and sheep (USAID, 2005). *Enset* is the main root crop across the region, particularly important in the highland areas, and many depend on it for survival (Regassa and Stoeckler, 2011). In the highland areas to the extreme east, shallots, garlic and kale are the main cash crops (USAID, 2005).



Figure 1.1 Map of SNNPR showing zones and special woredas

Source: www.bestbridge.org

In terms of education, Sidama Zone figures for 2011/2012 (see Table 1.3) show GER and NER to be above the regional average for girls and boys, and repetition rates to be lower. Dropout rates, however, are higher than the regional average, with over a quarter of students dropping out. The AAGR in primary education over four years (2010/11–2013/14) in Sidama is higher than the regional average at 4.5%, with girls' enrolment expanding more than boys', in keeping with regional and national trends (girls 5.2%; boys 3.8%; see Table 1.4), though in terms of numbers, girls still comprise less than half the primary student population. EMIS data for 2013/14 indicate 880 government and 96 non-government primary schools in the zone. The high enrolment figures are matched with high PTRs; the zonal PTR stands at 1:60 for 2013/14, as opposed to 1:51 for the region, and just over half the teachers are qualified⁶; in both Sidama and Silti zones a much higher percentage of female teachers than male teachers are qualified, both in the focus zones, and within SNNPR more generally (see Table 1.3).

⁶ A qualified teacher for primary level (both cycles) is required to have a diploma-level qualification from an accredited teacher training institute (college or university).

Table 1.3 Selected primary school statistics for SNNPR, Sidama & Silte zones 2011–2012 (E.C. 2004)

Location	Enrolment in 2013–2014			Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR)		
	F	M	T	F	M	T
SNNPR	1,908,784	2,131,315	4,040,099	4.1	3.6	3.8
Sidama Zone	423,840	451,736	875,576	5.2	3.8	4.5
Silte Zone	98,033	105,699	203,732	0.9	1.6	1.3

Source: Education Statistics Annual Abstract 2013–2014 (2006 E.C.)

Table 1.4 Primary enrolment & average annual growth rate (AAGR) 2010/11–2013/14

Location	Primary GER			Primary NER			% F	Repetition rates			Dropout rates			% of qualified teachers		
	F	M	T	F	M	T		F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T
SNNPR	95.6	106.1	100.8	89.0	97.6	93.3	47.2	9.4	8.7	9.0	21.2	20.4	20.8	60.0	55.2	56.6
Sidama Zone	140.5	146.9	143.7	100.8	105.3	103	48.4	7.7	6.8	7.2	26.8	25.3	26.0	60.1	46.8	49.1
Silte Zone	128.8	138.2	133.5	95.0	102.2	98.6	48.1	5.3	5.8	5.5	26.0	24.1	25.0	58.3	48.7	51.2

Source: Education Statistics Annual Abstract 2013–2014 (2006 E.C.)

Silte Zone

Silte Zone contrasts quite considerably with Sidama. One of the northernmost zones in SNNPR, its zonal centre Worabe is as near to Addis Ababa as it is to Hawassa. The zone's proximity to the country's capital allied with good road connections has provided Silte's almost exclusively Muslim population (98%; see Table 1.1), estimated to be around 900,000 by 2015 (CSA, 2008), good access to markets (Doilicho, 2007). The main agricultural sources of income are crops, particularly maize, *teff*, wheat and sorghum, for which the land is prepared around May, just before the onset of the main rains, and crops are harvested from mid October to December. In the highland western edge of the zone, *enset* and barley are cultivated. Livestock are relatively less important in the zone, and restricted to the better off farmers (USAID, 2005), mainly because the soil quality is poor. The Silte people have a long history of trading, and the women in particular spend a lot of time transporting mainly agricultural produce to the many markets in the area, and even as far as Addis Ababa. Seasonal migration to other SNNPR towns or to Addis also provides important income for households (USAID, 2005; Doilicho, 2007). A significant number of households are polygamous (Doilicho, 2007), and figures from the last census suggest that around 10% of children under 18 have lost one or both parents (CSA, 2008).

In terms of schooling, enrolments have also been increasing here but the AAGR from 20010/11–2013/14 is only 1.3, well below the figures for Sidama, or SNNPR as a whole (see Table 1.4), and slightly more for boys than for girls, which goes against the general regional trend. The latest available figures (see Table 1.3) showing the female share of primary enrolments, however, indicate a comparable proportion of enrolments are girls; at 48%, this is still slightly above the regional mean. In 2013/14 there were 284 primary schools with an average PTR of 1:52, though only around half the teachers are qualified.

1.4 Structure of the report

In this chapter of the report we have outlined the nature and purpose of this research, locating it within the broader research programme highlighted in Section 1.1, and relating it to particular aspects of the Speed School Programme. Following this, we have provided a brief overview of the socio-economic and educational contexts of SNNPR and the Sidama and Silte zones, where the study took place. Next, in Chapter 2, we provide a brief review of the relevant literature, in advance of detailing our conceptual

framing, research design, methodology and guiding research questions in Chapter 3. The main findings from the four case studies are synthesised in Chapters 4 and 5. In Chapter 4, we focus on the SHGs, their operationalization, their impact on household finances and on mothers' attitudes towards, and ability to support their children's schooling. In Chapter 5 we turn our attention to the Speed School graduates' experiences of government Link Schools, both in comparison with their Speed School experiences, and more generally, in relation to issues of retention, attendance, learning processes and outcomes. The concluding chapter first summarises the key issues from the study in relation to the research aims; the final section then offers recommendations for GGE to improve its effectiveness and help achieve the programme goals.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter considers the literature on SHGs and microfinance initiatives, focused on women in particular, and on factors affecting student access, retention and learning outcomes in schools in Ethiopia – our core research concerns in this study. Although we focus predominantly on research that has taken place in Ethiopia, and SNNPR in particular, especially for the second part of the review, we also draw more broadly on other studies within Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), particularly in relation to micro-finance and SHGs. Many of the studies we report on were produced by the Young Lives research project in Ethiopia⁷, which is a longitudinal study on child poverty over 15 years (www.younglives-ethiopia.org).

The chapter comprises three main sections. First, we consider SHGs, and the literature on the benefits and pitfalls of savings groups and micro-finance initiatives, weighing up the arguments for and against conditionality and considering the different types of conditionality. Then, we turn our attention to out-of-school factors that can affect access, retention and learning outcomes in school in Ethiopia, such as poverty, the need for children to work, community attitudes to education, etc. Finally, we focus on in-school factors that might ‘push’ children out of school, dissuade them from entering in the first place, or adversely affect their learning opportunities and outcomes. We do not address the literature on accelerated learning since that is covered in the inception report (see Akyeampong, 2015).

2.2. Micro-finance programmes

Micro-finance programmes, including the use of cash transfers (CTs) and self-help groups are common throughout the global South and are often targeted at the ‘poor’ and ‘ultra-poor’, however they may be defined, and at women. They are generally aimed at poverty alleviation and at female empowerment (D’Espallier *et al.*, 2013). This is also the case in Ethiopia at both national and regional level, for example through SNNPR’s Bureau for Women, Youth and Children’s Affairs’ (BoWCYA) Development and Change package launched in 2004 (Kebede and Regassa, 2015). There are an estimated 20,000 SHGs in Ethiopia, run by both government and/or various NGOs (Deko *et al.*, 2014).

Importantly, credit-driven MF more often than not does not benefit the most economically challenged in rural areas, but rather the ‘entrepreneurial poor’ in urban and semi-urban areas (Odell, 2011). With savings-led MF this is less often the case. Studies across Africa suggest the following **potential benefits of women’s MF** (including CTs and SHGs):

- Enhanced family well-being (generally health) through improved water and sanitation (Odell, 2011; D’Espallier *et al.*, 2013; Barca *et al.*, 2015);
- Increased capacity in women to support children’s schooling (Florescu, 2009; Haile *et al.*, 2012);
- Increased take-up of modern technology & access to and use of inputs in agriculture (e.g. fertiliser) (Biscaye *et al.*, 2014);
- Improved gender relations within the household by easing financial stress (Mayoux, 2005);
- Establishment of grassroots women’s groups in Ethiopia and improved female empowerment (Legovini, 2005; Gebreselassie *et al.*, 2012).

The **potential disadvantages** include:

- Increased workload for women (Mayoux, 2005);
- Women’s health adversely affected through fatigue and overwork (Haile *et al.*, 2012);

⁷ In Ethiopia the study is following two cohorts of children (2000 born in 2001/2002 and 1000 born in 1994/1995) in Addis Ababa and in the regions of Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR and Tigray.

- Increased care burdens for other (especially female) family members doing substitute childcare and/or involvement in the business (Mayoux, 2005; Woldehanna *et al.*, 2006);
- Increased gender conflict within the home because women may challenge gender norms (Mayoux, 2005);
- Modern saving schemes can threaten traditional savings and labour cooperation practices (e.g. *equb, daboo*) (Mayoux, 2005);
- Women usually receive less favourable repayment terms even though their repayment rates are better (Gobezie, 2010).

A study identified the following **problems regarding women's MF groups in SNNPR**, with the Omo Microfinance Institution (OMFI) (Kebede and Regassa, 2015):

- Group liability for loan repayments led to greater self-screening of members at formation of the group, thereby excluding the poorest;
- Women sometimes need spousal/community approval before applying for a loan;
- Some groups were unable to save consistently for the six-month period required before access to the loan is granted;
- Loan repayment was a problem for around 20%, as money was needed for subsistence;
- Money can be misspent by the husband.

There are various benefits of MF being practised through SHGs rather than micro-finance institutions (MFI), though note that that the GGE programme as it is presently practised in SNNPR involves use of savings-led SHGs and involvement of a MFI, therefore some of these benefits would not necessarily apply in all contexts. **Potential benefits of SHGs** identified in Ethiopia and elsewhere in SSA (taken from Legovini, 2005; Floresecu, 2009; Gobezie, 2010; Odell, 2011, Gebreselassie *et al.*, 2012; Deko *et al.*, 2014) include:

- Lower interest rates;
- No collateral required;
- Lower transport costs, with no need to travel to a bank;
- Faster loan disbursements, lacking in bureaucracy;
- Greater flexibility in loan repayments;
- Increased access to markets and to skills training;
- Greater reach into more remote, poorer areas;
- A high degree of client ownership;
- Greater tolerance of defaulters, and when members default, others don't have to pay on their behalf;
- Many SHGs have an emergency 'social fund' members can use in times of crisis;
- They build on traditions of community support and cooperation;
- SHGs help develop a culture of saving to withstand shocks.

Other social benefits for women identified in the same literature include:

- Social solidarity in times of need and stress;
- Opportunities for discussing broader social issues, such as health or domestic violence;
- Increased social confidence;
- Increased empowerment, often through development of leadership skills;
- Revived traditional social cooperation networks in urban areas, where they had been eroded.

Potential disadvantages and challenges include:

- Small savings lead to smaller amounts to invest and smaller returns;
- Groups in urban areas, who can save more and have better access to markets, tend to fare better;
- Returns are often needed for subsistence (including on family health, education);

- Need for cultural sensitivity providing credit in Muslim communities where ‘interest’ has been translated as *riba* (unjust and exploitative gain).

Operational shortcomings identified in other SHG programmes in Ethiopia include:

- Lack of bookkeeping & financial management skills, which can lead to a lack of transparency (Gobezie, 2010; Gebreselassie *et al.*, 2012);
- Mismatch between training needs of SHGs members and what’s offered (Gebreselassie *et al.*, 2012);
- A lack of or poorly targeted training for many, lack of continuity for some – an initial session with no follow-up (Florescu, 2009; Gebreselassie *et al.*, 2012; Deko *et al.*, 2014);
- Leaders often of higher social standing and use the SHG as a means of consolidating that position (Gebreselassie *et al.*, 2012);
- Lack of coordination with other CSOs at woreda level leading to duplication of effort and rivalry within communities especially regarding seed money (Deko *et al.*, 2014);
- Focus on seed money can result in half-hearted saving and lack of commitment to loan repayment (Gobezie, 2010);

And **crucially**,

- Insufficient M&E; no follow-up to ensure sustainability (Gebreselassie *et al.*, 2012).

Other lessons learned:

- Need for support of the family, especially the spouse/partner, for women’s participation to be successful (Haile *et al.*, 2012; Deko *et al.*, 2014);
- Need to address underlying structural inequalities for women to fully benefit from the potential of MF, including SHGs (Mayoux, 2005; Baden and Pionetti, 2011; Gebreselassie *et al.*, 2012);
- Need for close cooperation with woreda officials in all areas of project operation (Gebreselassie *et al.*, 2012).

Key issues arising from this review that GGE need to consider with regard to their own SHG programme relate to its ability to reach the very poorest women. Does it enable participants to save beyond what they need to satisfy basic needs, without making extra demands of them in terms of time and money? In GGE’s programme design, is attention being paid to household and societal gender inequalities and norms that might prevent the target beneficiaries (the mothers and children) from benefitting fully from the programme as intended? The review also highlights how relevant support, training and follow-up for programme participants are crucial to programme success and sustainability, whereas the provision of seed money might be less so. GGE should also weigh up the pros and cons outlined above of self-managed savings in SHGs as opposed to their being managed through MFIs.

2.3 Cash transfers

A core component of GGE’s strategy is a non-recurrent conditional cash transfer (CCT)⁸ in the form of seed money. Cash transfers (CTs) are an increasingly popular poverty alleviation strategy across SSA, including in Ethiopia, where the major CT scheme is the Productive Safety Net Programme (PNSP), which operates in eight of the country’s nine regions, reaching over 7 million who are chronically food-insecure. In exchange for 15kg of cereal in cash or kind, households provide five days of labour monthly (Jones *et al.*, 2010). Both unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) and CCTs have had positive impacts in various programmes across SSA (Arnold *et al.*, 2011; Garcia and Moore, 2012; Pellerano and Barca, 2014). That said, the debate over whether CCTs or UCTs are preferable lives on: the assumption behind conditionality is that poor people lack sufficient knowledge on the long-term benefits of education or healthcare, for example, or will not necessarily prioritise them (Arnold *et al.*, 2011; Baird *et al.*, 2014);

⁸ Either transferred in one lump sum, or in instalments.

conversely, proponents of UCTs assume that poor people are aware of the value but simply lack the resources to invest in them (*ibid.*). Specifically, UCTs and CCTs have contributed to gains in education and health, improved economic productivity and growth – notably in agriculture, and empowerment, particularly of women although it is often difficult to isolate effects due purely to CTs from other influencing factors (Garcia and Moore, 2012; Pellerano and Barca, 2014).

The **potential benefits of CTs** across SSA overlap with those found for MF in general:

- Easier access to credit when payments made on time (Barca *et al.*, 2015);
- Increased acquisition of productive assets (e.g. seeds and fertiliser), livestock and greater agricultural productivity (Miller *et al.*, 2008; Arnold *et al.*, 2011; Merttens *et al.*, 2014; Barca *et al.*, 2015);
- Increases in children's enrolment and reported better attendance (Fiszbein *et al.*, 2009; Arnold *et al.*, 2011; Baird *et al.*, 2015; Barca *et al.*, 2015);
- Less need for children to work as casual labour on other people's farms and less work needed on share-cropped land (Barca *et al.*, 2015);
- CCTs in health have also had positive knock-on effects on children's schooling e.g. better nutrition can lead to better concentration in class (Barca *et al.*, 2015);
- Review of qualitative research in SSA showed extra money spent on uniforms, shoes and hygiene could lead to greater uptake of schooling as children are less afraid of being bullied on account of their appearance (Barca *et al.*, 2015);
- Reduced stress around food security (Miller *et al.*, 2008; Arnold *et al.*, 2011);
- Increased social esteem, especially among older people (Merttens *et al.*, 2014; Barca *et al.*, 2015);
- Increased disposable income to spend on clothes and hygiene can lead to increased participation in community events (Barca *et al.*, 2015).

Disadvantages/challenges of CT programmes:

- With CCTs the most needy are often excluded as they are unable to fulfil the conditions (Mayoux, 2005; Garcia and Moore, 2012; Baird *et al.*, 2014).
- Many of the most financially challenged use the money to fulfil subsistence needs with little remaining to reinvest (Miller *et al.*, 2008; Garcia and Moore, 2012; Merttens *et al.*, 2014; Barca *et al.*, 2015);
- It is costly to do proper M&E on CTs (Slater and Farrington, 2009);
- Gendered household decision-making and power relations are not taken into account (Arnold *et al.*, 2011; Mayoux, 2005);
- The most common indicators for education are enrolment and attendance, which are often not reliable and/or useful proxies for learning (Filmer *et al.*, 2006, Lewin, 2009);
- CT payments are often not made on time (Barca *et al.*, 2015);
- CTs can result in children engaging in more work/labour, including household chores, rather than having more study/leisure time (Miller *et al.*, 2008; Barca *et al.*, 2015);
- Better enrolment and attendance does not necessarily lead to better student attainment; studies predominantly in Latin America suggest this only happens among the relatively financially better off students and when the quality of schooling is good (Fiszbein *et al.*, 2009).

2.4 Issues surrounding access, quality and outcomes in schooling in Ethiopia

Here we review the evidence on access and school quality in Ethiopia, looking at the **in-school and out-of-school factors** affecting whether young people go to school, how their experience school, whether they persist in school, and the eventual outcomes of schooling. Crucially, **these factors are interlinked, mutually reinforcing and contextually specific**. First, we briefly sketch the recent trends in educational participation in Ethiopia and the implication for access, retention, completion and learning outcomes, drawing out implication for the Speed School programme.

Patterns of access

School attendance varies across the country although **GER and NER have both increased dramatically between 2000/2001 and 2013/2014 in all regions, and for both girls and boys**; similarly, the number of primary schools has multiplied (UNESCO, 2015). In SNNPR, there were almost four times the number of primary schools in 2013/2014 than there were in 2000/2001. However, **dropout and repetition rates remain high, especially in Grades 1, 5 and 8**. Dropout rates for 2012/13 were as follows: 25% for Grade 1, 19% for Grade 5, and 32% for Grade 8. The average repetition rate was 4.9%, but was around 9% for Grade 1 (*ibid.*).

As work from various countries in the Global South have shown, slow progress, coupled with initial late enrolment makes it unlikely that many poorer children from rural areas, in particular, will complete their basic education (Lewin, 2009). Research in Ethiopia backs this up: the most recent survey data from the longitudinal Young Lives project found that **grade completion was slow and the percentage of overage children still high**, although the percentage of overage children declined very slightly (from 59% to 52%) and the average grade completion improved slightly between 2006 and 2013. The situation was more likely to be worse among poorer, rural households with less educated parents/guardians, and there was considerable regional variation (Woldehanna and Pankhurst, 2014).

In SNNPR, for example, on average only 2.3 grades had been completed within that time frame and the percentage of overage students had risen from 75% in 2006 to 80% in 2013. Late entry into school is a major factor in having high numbers of overage students; in 2009 in SNNPR, 46% of students had not started school when they were 7 or 8 (*ibid.*) In a national survey, the mean age for starting school was ten years old (Erulkar *et al.*, 2010). In the qualitative data from the Young Lives school survey, some children reported being advised by their teacher to drop out and re-join school if they experienced repeated or long-term absenteeism. However, the children often fail to re-join school once they have dropped out, or may drop out again quickly if they rejoin (Frost and Rolleston, 2013).

The above findings are important for the potential sustainability of the Speed School programme as the tracking survey (Tsegay, 2016) provides further evidence of **slow student progression through school even for Speed School graduates**, either through repetition on account of poor test results, and/or on account of dropping in and out of school. Although around 80% of the cohort of 2011/2012 Speed School graduates in SNNPR involved in the longitudinal survey (see Section 1.1) were found still to be in school, two thirds were in Grades 5–7, with a quarter in Grade 6, not in Grade 8, where they should be if they had transitioned into Grade 4 after Speed School and had moved up a grade every subsequent year. This makes them less likely to complete school. Thus, **even though the Speed School year helps improve the NER by reducing the number of overage students in school, Speed school graduates in the Link Schools, as well as other students, may still be at risk of dropping out**.

Marginalised groups

The field work for Jennings *et al.*'s (2011) social assessment for the education sector, which took place in Gambella, Somali, Amhara and SNNPR, confirmed the other research findings that **the main determinants of inequality and exclusion from formal education** are:

- Poverty and food insecurity;
- Child labour at home and for commercial purposes;
- Distance from school, especially secondary school;
- Gender disparities, with early marriage still a major constraint;
- Pastoralist lifestyle (affecting 12 million pastoralists or semi-pastoralists); key issues being their mobility, lack of food security and irrelevant curriculum.

Other vulnerable groups intersecting with these determinants included:

- Orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs), which includes orphans and children living on the streets or in urban areas, or who have been trafficked;
- Children with special needs, including those with disabilities (problems with discrimination in homes, communities and schools, and schools' lack of facilities and/or adequately trained staff to support them).

2.5 Out-of-school factors

Many of the **out-of-school factors** that exclude children from full participation in schooling in Ethiopia are common to other national contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa and **are interlinked: poverty is most commonly the root cause** connected to food insecurity, and the need for children to work – often heavy and/or hazardous work, which can result in health problems and affect school attendance and learning (Tafere *et al.*, 2009; Pankhurst and Tafere, 2015), gendered patterns of disadvantage are more acute in rural areas, with boys more often dropping out to undertake paid work, and girls having to stay at home to help with sibling care and other domestic chores (Frost and Rolleston, 2013). They are also linked to in-school factors that can compound disadvantage, discussed in Section 2.7

Poverty

Poverty is a major determinant of whether children have the opportunity to attend and persist in school, have the time, energy, disposition and opportunity to study and learn effectively. Importantly, poverty needs to be conceptualised as **multi-dimensional, contextually specific** and **dynamic** – a point we return to in Chapter 3 – though most studies predominantly focus on economic poverty.

Although state education is theoretically free in Ethiopia, the direct recurrent costs of clothing and school materials as well as the opportunity costs incurred through loss of child work (see below) affect the ability of children from the poorest families to attend school regularly and learn. Moreover, schools have also increasingly made demands of families to make financial and/or labour contributions to school infrastructural development, (FMoE, 2010), which government recognises has overburdened some communities and exacerbated inequalities when poor communities cannot afford the time and/or expense (*ibid.*)

Poverty manifests itself in the need for children to work, earn income, assist with caring duties, migrate, and can result in hunger, fatigue, ill-health, vulnerability to violence, or depression. We discuss many of these issues in the following sections.

Child work/labour

According to the most recent full household survey data (CSA & ICF International 2012), 27% of children under 15 are involved in some kind of child labour⁹ with average figures higher for boys (31%) than girls (24%), and in rural areas (30%) and among the poorest households. Workloads tend to increase with age, as over half 12–14-year-olds are involved in labour, as compared to 17% between the ages of 5 and 11. Figures for SNNPR (31%) are higher than the national average.

Features of child work/labour in Ethiopia (mainly from the Young Lives studies: Camfield, 2009; Tafere *et al.*, 2009; Woldehanna, 2009; Orkin, 2012; Frost and Rolleston, 2013; Pankhurst and Tafere, 2015; Tafere and Chuta, 2016):

- Gendered cultural norms play a part in expectations of children's work patterns (see also Jennings *et al.*, 2011);

⁹ Defined as 'labour' not work, including a) children aged 5-11 who in the week preceding the survey worked for someone outside the family, with or without pay, or engaged in any family work or household chores for 28 or more hours; and b) children aged 12-14 who in the same time period did work inside or outside the family for 14 hours or more or household chores for 28 hours or more.

- Younger boys and girls generally do more unpaid work within the home – collecting firewood, cooking; this tends to increase for girls, along with childcare duties as they get older;
- Boys generally have more opportunities for income-generating activities (IGAs), which increase as they get older;
- Because much of the female work is home-related older girls can usually combine work and study more easily than older boys can;
- Potential benefits of work include skills acquisition, improved self-esteem, and can raise money to support own schooling.

BUT

- Most evidence suggests that in Ethiopia work usually competes with study, being detrimental to student health (physical and mental), affecting their ability to concentrate, resulting in absenteeism and/or eventual dropout.

Migration and trafficking

Migration and trafficking also affects student retention and continuity in schooling.

Features of migration and trafficking in Ethiopia:

- High levels of rural-urban migration (Erulkar *et al.*, 2010; Jennings *et al.*, 2011);
- Also seasonal migration, which results either in student absenteeism as they migrate with their carers, or a lack of supervision at home as parents migrate (FMOE and UNICEF, 2012);
- In a national survey of 10,000 young adults the main reason given for migration was education, followed by economic opportunities, then family (often marriage for female respondents) (Erulkar *et al.*, 2010);
- Economic migration to Middle Eastern countries (e.g. Saudi Arabia), especially from Muslim communities (Camfield, 2009);
- Migration sometimes forced: poor families having to “farm out” children to relatives or foster parents who do not necessarily provide/allow schooling to continue and the children are open to exploitation (Tadele, 2007);
- Trafficking, especially of young females as domestic workers, both nationally and internationally (ILO, 2011).

The reported high levels of internal migration within SNNPR (Jennings *et al.*, 2011) also has implications of the ability of GGE to properly track Speed School graduates, as also exemplified in the Speed School household tracking survey (Tsegay, 2016).

Health and hygiene

Even though conditions are said to be improving, there are **major poverty-related health and hygiene issues** affecting many children’s ability to persist in school and/or concentrate in class. These include:

- Widespread malnutrition, though conditions are improving (FMOE, 2010);
- Common problems include anaemia, trachoma, iodine deficiency, intestinal worms, visual and auditory impairments (Hall *et al.*, 2008; FMOE, 2010);
- Widespread hunger; in a national survey over 90% of schoolchildren had gone to school that day without breakfast (Hall *et al.*, 2008); other meals too may be missed (Tafere, 2012).
- Long-term health ill-effects from arduous, hazardous work, especially among poor rural boys (Tafere *et al.*, 2009; Chuta, 2014; Pankhurst and Tafere, 2015)
- Malaria as a seasonal hazard in the rainy season; diarrhoeal disease more in the dry season when water is scarce for personal hygiene (USAID, 2005; MoWCYA, 2013);
- Student illness, which results in absenteeism and dropout; sickness of family members too; girls are more affected to cover care duties (Orkin, 2012; Frost and Rolleston, 2013; Semela and Woldie, 2015) though boys may have to leave to earn income to support the family;
- Menstruation, which is an important cause of absenteeism among girls, resulting in learning difficulties and dropout due to menstruation-related health effects (MoWCYA, 2013; Tegegne

and Sisay, 2014); also cultural practices regarding menarche can cause girls to absent themselves (Ngales, 2007).

Girls' education

Girls are considered a vulnerable category in terms of access to and experience of schooling (Jennings *et al.*, 2011), but they, like boys, are not a homogenous group, and their vulnerabilities vary depending on a combination of region, culture, lifestyle, location, age, socio-economic status, disability etc.

Factors affecting girls' education:

- Studies show high levels of support for girls' and boys' education (see section below) (Tafere, 2014; Semela and Woldie, 2015), and improving support for girls' education in particular (Woldehanna *et al.*, 2008; FMoE, 2010; Semela and Woldie, 2015), though boys' education is still generally preferred, possibly because of their greater earning potential (Semela and Woldie, 2015);
- Early marriage and/or marriage by abduction are still major reasons for girls not entering or not completing school, though the situation is said to be improving (Save the Children, Denmark, 2008; Erulkar *et al.*, 2010; FMoE, 2010; Jennings *et al.*, 2011; Semela and Woldie, 2015; Tafere and Chuta, 2016);
- Stress, related to fear of marriage or abduction, can cause non-enrolment, absenteeism and/or dropout (Sarton *et al.*, 2009; Fehr, 2010; Semela and Woldie, 2015);
- Financial hardship is likely to be a major driver of early marriage as the girl's family usually derives some financial benefit (Boyden *et al.*, 2012);
- In some cultures, girls may also be betrothed at a young age and kept at home also as a way of securing her (and the family's) future financial security, protecting her from perceived greater ills of vulnerability to abduction and/or pregnancy outside marriage (Boyden *et al.*, 2012);
- Menstruation and menstruation health-related effects (as mentioned in the section above) are a major cause of absenteeism, poor performance in school, and occasionally dropout (Ngales, 2007; MoWCYA, 2013; Tegegne and Sisay, 2014); sometimes boys' teasing girls about menstruation also results in absenteeism (Fehr, 2010; MoWCYA, 2013);
- Female genital modification¹⁰ (FGM) can be a cause of bullying among girls who do not undergo the procedure in areas where it is still the cultural norm (Boyden *et al.*, 2012);
- Sexual violence, including rape, has been reported, especially on the way to school and among secondary school students, particularly in urban areas; this can result in emotional distress, absenteeism and dropout (Mekonnen and Asresash, 2007; Save the Children Denmark, 2008; MoWCYA, 2013);

Attitudes to schooling

Parental/guardian attitudes towards formal schooling are also seen as obstacles to children's sustained participation in schooling, particularly for girls, and especially in pastoralist and indigenous communities (FMoE, 2010), though there is evidence of change:

- Strong evidence of high levels of support for girls' and boys' schooling, in urban and rural areas for poor and non-poor households (Tafere, 2014);
- Around 95% approval in Sidama and Silte for girls' education in a recent survey of 9000 households (Semela and Woldie, 2015);
- Aspiration and expectations for schooling may change with time in response to changing circumstances, poor educational attainment, perceptions about the quality or relevance of schooling, causing priorities to be re-evaluated, which may force some students to drop out (see Tafere and Chuta, 2016).

¹⁰ Here, we follow Koster and Price (2008) in preferring 'modification' to 'mutilation' as a less pejorative term especially as FGM may be performed for reasons of social acceptance in society.

2.6 School-related factors

In Ethiopia, as in other countries in the Global South, in-school factors – related to infrastructure and resources, as well as the school curriculum, formal and informal practices, and the quality of teaching – affect children’s enrolment (or non-enrolment) in school, retention, learning opportunities and outcomes. In the first round of the Young Lives school survey in Ethiopia, the reason given for dropping out of school in around 13% of cases was ‘child does not want to go’, affecting girls (14%) slightly more than boys (12%), and children in rural schools (15%), far more than in urban schools (4%) (Frost and Rolleston, 2013). The reasons behind not wanting to go to school are likely to relate to one or more aspects of school quality discussed in the following sections. These in-school factors, in turn, often interact with the out-of-school issues highlighted above; for example, children who miss school on account of illness may then be denied re-entry because school regulations demand a medical note, which they do not have since their parents/guardians could not afford to take them to the clinic (Tafere *et al.*, 2009).

School supply

School supply issues include:

- School supply has increased but not kept pace with increasing enrolments, especially at secondary level (FMoE, 2015);
- Distance to school is a serious concern, especially with regards to concerns about safety – for girls in particular (Woldehanna *et al.*, 2008; FMoE, 2010; Semela and Woldie, 2015), and transport costs and travel time among very poor families in rural areas (Pereznieto and Jones, 2006; Frost and Rolleston, 2013);
- School shortages can result in higher PTRs, which has implications for school quality.

Infrastructure and resources

Despite a concerted drive by government, NGOs and communities to construct more schools and upgrade existing facilities, for example through the School Improvement Programme (FMoE, 2015), **the existence of overcrowded, under-resourced classrooms in poor condition**, as in many countries in SSA, **is still a major constraint for many schools** (CfBT, 2009; Sarton *et al.*, 2009; Tate *et al.*, 2011; Frost and Rolleston, 2013; Zike and Ayele, 2015).

This can contribute to:

- Teacher ineffectiveness;
- Low teacher morale;
- Student dissatisfaction, discomfort and reduced ability to learn.

A 2004 study by the Ministry of Health found that **80% of all communicable disease in Ethiopia is caused by a combination of unsafe water and lack of sanitation facilities** (Wateraid, 2005):

- 50% of schools lacked water in a recent national survey – 65% of rural schools (Zike and Ayele, 2015);
- The poor condition of toilets, often lacking privacy, can cause female students to miss school during menstruation, and can contribute to their dropping out (Tegegne and Sisay, 2014).

Timetabling

Length of shift, timing of school holiday and weekly timetabling variations affect student enrolment and attendance:

- A single shift is often preferred by very poor parents/guardians as it allows children to work (Frost and Rolleston, 2013; Pankhurst and Tafere, 2015);
- Some schools adopt flexible timetabling during harvest seasons or adjust their weekly timetable to accommodate market days (Frost and Rolleston, 2013);

- A school in Tigray provides childcare services on market days so that girls who usually missed class to look after siblings can attend (Frost and Rolleston, 2013).

This has implications for GGE's timetabling: holding Speed School classes over a double shift might be excluding some of the very poorest children from participating, as was found in one of the case studies. Similar timetabling accommodations could be considered for the Link Schools.

Medium of instruction (MOI)

As in other countries in SSA, **the medium of instruction continues to be a major impediment to teaching quality and student learning**, especially in regions that have chosen to teach in English from Grade 5 (Heugh *et al.*, 2007).

- Government has invested heavily in an English Language Improvement Programme but many teachers still struggle (Heugh *et al.*, 2007); in a national survey of Grade 3 & 4 teachers, over half failed to score over 50% on their English (Zike and Ayele, 2015);
- Students also find it difficult to understand lessons (Heugh *et al.*, 2007; Bogale, 2009);
- Some teachers mistakenly think the solution is to start teaching *in* English earlier (Bogale, 2009; Vujich, 2013);
- Parental pressure, especially from minority language speakers concerned that their children might be disadvantaged, pushes for English (Bogale, 2009);
- There is confusion in many SSA countries that learning *in* English will improve a student's English whereas learning in English often prevents students from learning in other subjects (Alidou *et al.*, 2006; Heugh *et al.*, 2007);
- Mother Tongue Education (MTE) is also a problem in some schools that lack teachers who can teach in the local language (Bogale, 2009; UNICEF, 2010; Vujich, 2013);
- MOI policy therefore adversely affects learning, and therefore contributes to exam failure, higher repetition rates and likely dropout.

Erroneous teacher and parental assumptions about the relationship between teaching in English and learning would therefore need to be taken up with regional education bureau officials and would provide a focus for discussion in the Link School capacity building programme.

Curriculum, pedagogy and classroom practices

Poor quality pedagogical interaction in the classroom is another reason both for poor learning outcomes and student disaffection, which can lead to student absenteeism and eventual dropout. Indeed in the national Education Sector Development Plan (ESDPV) V, the FMoE maintains that "the largest barrier to effective implementation of the revised curriculum is the lack of pedagogical skills amongst teachers" (FMoE, 2015: 57).

Observational studies have noted:

- A predominance of "chalk and talk", with some individual students being asked questions (Asgedom *et al.*, 2006; Heugh *et al.*, 2007; UNICEF, 2010);
- High levels of ritualised "safe talk" (Heugh *et al.*, 2007);
- Low levels of active learning (AL) required by the curriculum (Asgedom *et al.*, 2006; Kraft and Epstein, 2014);
- Low levels of student feedback on student work and of low quality (Frost and Rolleston, 2013);
- Textbooks rarely used even when available (DeStefano and Elaheebocus, 2010).

The persistence of traditional forms of teaching is usually justified by teachers as being due to:

- Overcrowded classrooms, overloaded syllabus, lack of textbooks, and syllabuses and examinations demanding factual recall and rote learning (Asgedom *et al.*, 2006; Serbessa 2006; Kraft and Epstein, 2014).

However, alternative explanations lie in:

- Teachers' and students' continued conceptualisation of teaching in behaviourist input-output terms;
- Teachers' suspicion and/or lack of understanding about AL;

Again, these alternative explanations concerning teacher understandings of teaching and learning have implications for the GGE Link School capacity development programme.

Discipline

School disciplinary practices, and corporal punishment (CP) in particular, can have a detrimental effect on student learning, attendance and the desire to remain in school; several national studies report on the issue (e.g. Save the Children Denmark, 2008; Save the Children Sweden, 2011):

- CP is banned but widely practised;
- It affects boys more than girls, younger students more than adolescents, and is more prevalent in urban areas;
- Reasons for CP include late-coming, disruptive behaviour in class, failing to complete homework, breaking school rules;
- Girls are more often at the receiving end of verbal or psychological disciplining;
- CP is supported by parents and teachers, who feel that discipline cannot be maintained otherwise;
- Some students report that CP causes them to lose concentration, miss class and occasionally to drop out;
- Latecomers are often denied access to class, which often compounds disadvantage since rural students from less economically advantaged backgrounds are more likely to have more jobs to complete and often further to walk to get to school.

Violence in school

Although corporal punishment (see section above) and violence against female students have been studied in school (the latter mainly in secondary and tertiary education; e.g. Mekonnen and Asresash, 2007, MoWCYA, 2013) there appear to be no available studies that look at violence in all its manifestations (e.g. bullying, teasing, fighting, social exclusion) more generally in schools, though violence is a documented worldwide phenomenon in schools (see Leach and Mitchell, 2006) and is known to have numerous detrimental effects on students' experiences of schooling.

The limited findings within Ethiopia include:

- In a survey of 8-year-olds fighting among students was what they most disliked about school (Ogando Portola and Pells, 2015);
- Some reports of bullying/"teasing" behaviours: e.g. boys teasing girls about using latrines and menstruation, which can lead to absenteeism and dropout (Fehr, 2010; MoWCYA, 2013);
- Older girls being teased by boys about coming to school to look for a husband, or being called "mother" (Save the Children Denmark, 2008).

However, school violence needs to be contextualised with broader societal experiences of, and attitudes towards, violence. The most recent national demographic and household survey showed that levels of acceptance of domestic violence are very high: 45% of men thought it was justified for them to beat their wife/partner for one of several specified behaviours, while over two-thirds of women thought it was acceptable (CSA & ICF International, 2012). Figures were much higher in SNNPR, and generally among rural, less educated respondents and those in the poorest quintile. This suggests that violence is an integral part of the lives of many families, including those of Speed School students and graduates, with likely adverse effects.

Teachers, teaching quality and teacher management

Teacher commitment and competence are crucial to teaching quality and are interlinked.

- Teachers for teacher training colleges are often selected from the lowest-attaining graduates from Grade 10, those who are not able to get a place at university, which has implications for both teacher motivation and competence (Semela, 2014);
- Teacher dissatisfaction is also due to: poor salary and career structure, and lack of transparency over its implementation; a lack of respect by the community; poor management and pedagogical support at school and woreda level; and unfavourable teaching and learning conditions, including large, overcrowded, poorly resourced classes. (CfBT, 2009; Sarton *et al.*, 2009; FMoE, 2015);
- 70% of teachers surveyed in 2014 said they would leave the profession if given an equivalent pay option (FMoE, 2015);
- Pre-service education is inadequate, in part due to neglect during the Derg era and the wholesale adoption of a westernised teaching curriculum and teacher education curriculum immediately after their overthrow (Semela, 2014);
- High teacher turnover limits the effectiveness of educational planning, policy implementation and M&E (Tate *et al.*, 2011);
- Woreda and school management also often need support to support teachers (FMoE, 2010);
- There is widespread teacher absenteeism (though it varies according to region and specific sites); in one national survey 40% of teachers were absent either from school or from the class, with even higher figures for rural areas (Zike and Ayele, 2015).
- Percentage of qualified teachers has increased in recent years, though average student attainment has decreased (FMoE, 2010; Semela, 2014).
- A national survey of teacher competence for Grades 3 & 4 showed relatively high levels of subject knowledge in Maths (90% passed) but low in English, and even lower in pedagogy: only 25% achieved the 50% pass mark. Teachers in urban schools did better than teachers in rural schools, on average (Zike and Ayele, 2015).

The fact that many teachers are unmotivated, poorly prepared and are given inadequate support has implications for how GGE needs to structure the Link School capacity development programme, and the level of support for both teachers and management that needs to be provided. The literature suggests that the expectation that teachers will willingly sit around and discuss pedagogy without some kind of incentive when many fail to carry out the teaching they are paid to do would seem over optimistic.

Learning outcomes & implications

Although enrolments have been increasing, **learning outcomes have been decreasing, or have remained low** in national examinations and other standardised tests (FMoE, 2015), such as the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and the Young Lives tests. The **potential effects of low learning outcomes** include:

- Grade repetition, which in turn increases the likelihood of overage students dropping out;
- Student motivation drops, which can also contribute to dropout;
- Loss of parental/carer support for schooling, which can also lead to dropout (UNESCO, 2015).

Examples of low and declining average learning outcomes include:

- In the 2010 EGRA tests over a third of Grade 2 students were unable to read a single word of a grade-level story and 48% of students were unable to answer a single reading comprehension question (FMoE, 2015).
- In the 2014 bench-marking exercise in seven of the country's 'mother tongues', over two thirds of Sidamu Afoo speakers and three quarters of Hadiyya speakers – mainly in SNNPR – were classified as 'non-readers' (*ibid.*)
- Comparing two Young Lives cohorts of 12-year olds in 2006 and 2013: scores in both reading (in mother tongue) and Mathematics dropped for both urban and rural locations, though rural/urban inequalities widened and there were noticeable regional differences; gender

differences were far less apparent. SNNPR attained the worst reading results: 16% of 12-year-olds were unable to read anything, which doubled to 32% of 12-year-olds in 2013 (Woldehanna and Gebremedhin, 2016);

- In the 2004 National Learning Assessment (NLA), only 7.5% of the Grade 4 population attained a composite mark of over 50%.

Arguably, increasing enrolment and repetition rates, and insufficient resources to deal with them, are at least partially responsible for fuelling the decline and/or lack of improvement in student performance. However, it is more likely to be due to a combination of factors (such as the ones discussed in this review), which vary according to context.

2.7 Implications of the literature review for Geneva Global

The above review of the literature offers various insights that are of relevance for GGE's future development planning. In addition, some of the reported findings from similar interventions, with regards to MF, SHGs and CTs in particular, also foreshadow our research findings, which are presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

Several points are worth highlighting. First, it is apparent from the literature that poverty is both relative and multi-dimensional: thus, for example, the ultra-poor in Ethiopia are often unable to save regularly, are short of time, are more prone to suffer from ill-health, and/or domestic violence, which affects their ability to work (just as ill-health can also be a result of arduous and/or hazardous work and/or violence) and/or study effectively. This has implications for the demands of conditionality (time and money) that are currently being made of the women in GGE's SHGs, regarding attendance at meetings and regular saving. At the same time, the evidence also points to the need to devise SHG/MF strategies that do not inadvertently result in other family members missing school to cover for a mother's involvement in SHG activities.

From the literature it is also clear that the opportunity costs of schooling increase for both girls and boys, in different ways as they get older; for girls in terms of increased domestic responsibilities and their "worth" in marriage, and for boys in terms of the greater income-earning potential. Thus, if SHGs are intended to generate sufficient income to sustain the Speed School graduates in the Link school, they need to cover, at the very least, both the direct costs of schooling and the opportunity costs – what the family is losing in terms of the student's income, labour and other value.

On the other hand, the studies reviewed also highlight the need for Geneva Global and other complementary NGOs to work together with government to address the multiple dimensions of poverty (food-security, health, vulnerability to violence etc.) to enable the very poorest students to be able to participate fully and effectively in school and succeed in their learning. Thus, providing these students with learning materials will not be enough on its own to ensure their retention in the Link School and future success in learning.

Equally pertinent is the need to understand the complexities and gendered nature of intra-household decision-making and economic spending in different contexts. The evidence suggests that women have varying degrees of control over the money they earn, so may not have total say on how money from the SHG is spent. Additionally, in cash-strapped families money that may have been earmarked for saving or for school books, for example, may have to be diverted to satisfy more fundamental needs in times of crisis.

There was little evidence that poor people do not value education. On the other hand, the Young Lives studies showed that children and families have to revise educational priorities and expectations on account of changing circumstances; at such times, school quality is a major factor that is taken into

account, which underlines the importance of the school capacity development programme to help improve school quality.

What is also clear from the data on student learning outcomes is that moving up through the grades at school does not necessarily indicate that a student is learning; more will be known about issues related to student progress – and the implications for how GGE tracks Speed School graduates' progress in the future – once the 2011 Speed School graduates in the longitudinal study have been tested for a second time. Similarly, the reported widespread teacher absenteeism – which contributes to unreliable attendance records – also casts doubt on the usefulness of attendance as an indicator for tracking Speed School graduates in the Link School. It also reinforces the need to help improve Link School quality to ensure the learning gains made in Speed School are not lost in the Link School.

School quality, the literature shows, is multi-dimensional – both in-school factors that contribute to school quality (or lack of) and out-of-school factors that impact on a student's ability to attend school and study effectively impact on learning quality, and are interlinked. This implies that to improve school quality, the Link School capacity development programme will require closer collaboration with communities and with government – as per our model of school access (see Section 3.3) – to ensure a broader consideration of school quality. This would encompass aspects such as school management, teacher professionalism and school-community relations, which together would complement GGE's focus on pedagogy and strengthen the likelihood of the Speed School programme achieving a lasting impact.

Other lessons from the literature regard sustainability – the need for sustained, relevant training and follow-up for SHG programmes, including coordination with other NGOs and with local government.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter explains the study's research methodology. First, we present our conceptual framing of key issues, before outlining the research design and approach in broad terms, and the research timeline. Then we move on to the specifics of the sample and details of the methods and analysis, before looking at some of the limitations and ethics of the research.

3.2 Conceptual framing

The first issue to clarify is our understanding of school access and school quality as overlapping concepts: student enrolment, retention and regular attendance at school are meaningless unless genuine learning is going on in the classroom (UNESCO, 2004). Access therefore includes educational quality, process and outcomes, and it needs to be inclusive, equitable and sustainable (Consortium for Research into Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE), 2008: 1). To put it another way, although we investigate Speed School student retention and attendance in Link Schools in this study – since they are necessary initial steps towards learning – what we are ultimately concerned with are the learning opportunities available to students, the quality of the learning processes, and the resultant or likely learning outcomes.

The second conceptual point to make is that access to quality education is heavily dependent on contextually specific, dynamic social processes within and among three broad stakeholder groups: educational administrations, schools and communities. While each stakeholder group on its own can have a significant bearing on a student access to quality education, it is their interactions in particular contexts that combine to produce an enabling or disabling environment for sustained access and student learning (Dunne *et al.*, 2007; see Figure 3.1). For this reason, although our focus is on Speed School graduates' experiences in Link Schools, our research design includes interviews from respondents across these three stakeholder groups, since what they say and do has a major influence on student experiences and opportunities.

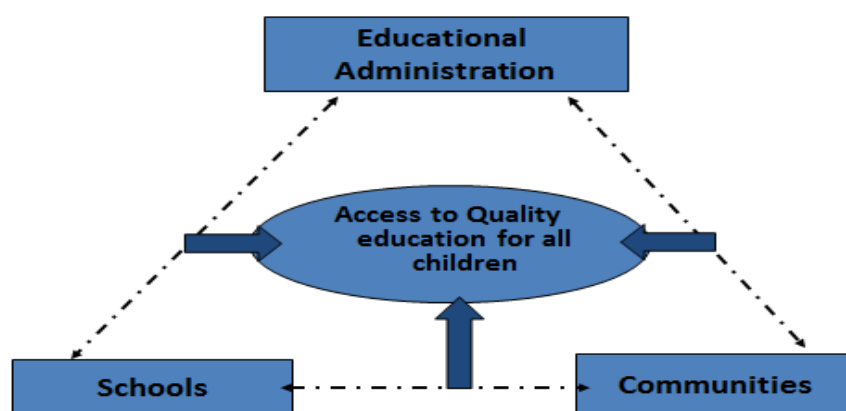


Figure 3.1: Conceptual model for Access to quality education

Source: Dunne *et al.*, 2007

This necessary synergy among schools, local government and communities is similarly recognised in GGE's revised Quality Guide. With regards to the Speed School Programme, specifically, we need to find out whether the Speed School graduates have opportunities to build on the successful foundation for learning they have gained from their Speed School year.

The final term to conceptualise is poverty. Importantly, we conceive poverty as being multi-dimensional, not just a question of economic hardship; it is related to material, social and emotional conditions that can be mutually reinforcing and compound disadvantage (Bonai and Tarabini, 2016). Poverty is also gendered; this does not mean simply that more women live in poverty than men (though that is also true in many contexts), but that poverty interacts with different women and different men in particular ways – for example in relation to access to credit, or to healthcare, or in relation to intra-household finances and decision-making – all of which are context-specific and dynamic (Kabeer, 1994, 1996; Ravazi, 1998).

With regards to the Speed School programme, this kind of complexity invites a (re)consideration of some of the assumptions made about poverty in relation to the SHG members and the Speed School graduates that may underpin aspects of the intervention’s design. Understanding poverty and school access as both complex and contextually situated suggests a need to conduct baseline research in any given context to find out the realities on the ground, and adapting programme design and implementation accordingly.

3.3. Research design

Consistent with our understanding that sustained access to quality education involves contextually specific social processes enacted on a daily basis, we adopted an ethnographic, case-study approach to the research, involving multiple visits to four case-study schools over a period of six months (Nov 2015– May 2016). ***Crucially, ethnographic case studies such as these can shed light on the complex processes that affect project outcomes in ways that large-scale survey data cannot, and indeed they can suggest possible explanations for survey findings.*** More specifically, the insights from this case-study research will be used to inform the follow-up survey to be carried out later in 2017.

The research visits entailed repeated observations in and around the schools and their immediate environment, as well as formal and informal interviews, to gain multiple perspectives, and a sense of respondents’ ever-changing realities. Although there was limited use of descriptive statistics, mainly from EMIS data, the study is primarily qualitative, providing plenty of “thick description” (Geertz, 1973). ***The qualitative data clearly illustrate the heterogeneity of the different contexts in which the Speed Programme operates, even as we draw out the commonalities; they also provide insights into the everyday processes of the programme – its successes and its challenges – which survey data are unable to provide.*** The empirical data were supplemented with Geneva Global documentation and other secondary documentary data.

Research questions

As highlighted in Chapter 1, this study seeks to provide insights on three overlapping issues:

- The operationalisation of the SHG programme;
- The links between mothers’ participation in SHGs and children’s participation in schooling;
- Speed School graduates’ experiences in government Link Schools and factors that affect attendance, retention and learning outcomes.

These are broken down into more detailed research questions, as follows:

1. How are SHGs operating in practice?
2. In what ways and to what extent are SHGs helping to generate income for mothers?
3. What are SHGs members’ attitudes towards schooling?
4. In what ways and to what extent are SHGs supporting children’s schooling?
5. What improvements could be made to help SHGs operate more effectively to a) generate income for poor households and b) provide increased financial support for children’s schooling?
6. What are Speed School graduates’ experiences of Speed Schools?
7. How do Speed School graduates experience the transition from Speed School to Link School?

8. What out-of-school factors help or prevent Speed School graduates from making and/or sustaining the transition from Speed Schools to Link Schools?
9. What out-of-school factors help or prevent Speed School graduates from attending Link Schools regularly and learning?
10. What out-of-school factors cause Speed School graduates to drop out of Link Schools?
11. What in-school factors help or prevent Speed School graduates from attending Link Schools regularly?
12. What in-school factors contribute to Speed School graduates dropping out of Link Schools?
13. What challenges to learning do Speed School graduates experience inside Link Schools?
14. What improvements could be made to the Speed School Programme to ensure students' greater retention and continued learning in Link Schools?

3.4 Research process

The research process was collaborative, involving close cooperation and constant dialogue among the three core research team members, both electronically via e-mail, Skype and phone conversation, and face-to-face in SNNPR. In addition, the translators were also invited to the research workshops. The translators' greater involvement and more localised insights enhanced interpretation of emergent findings, while affording them opportunities to learn about research and to reflect on their own practices as teachers and principals.

The research process was also iterative, in that while the research timeline described in Table 3.1 shows five distinct phases of preparation, initiation (which involved piloting instruments and assessing the suitability of the case-study sites), field work (data gathering) and then analysis and write-up, prior to dissemination, most phases were overlapping. Thus, for example, instruments and analytical categories were open to revision beyond the piloting phase and preliminary analysis of observations and earlier interviews informed later interactions and analysis.

Table 3.1 The research timetable

Phase	Activities	Outputs
Phase I Preparation June–Sept 2015	1.1 Review of relevant literature and project documents 1.2 Scoping visit to meet GG staff, establish link with University of Hawassa, & familiarisation with Speed School programme and link schools	Formation of research team Researcher contracts Development of research plan Background research brief Identification of sample (in general)
Phase II Initiation Oct–Nov 2015	2.1 Contact with relevant government education offices 2.2 Research methods workshop: – presentation of draft research design & instruments – presentation of contextual data – discussion of ethical & methodological approach – discussion and piloting of instruments – identification of school, SHG and Speed School graduate sample – visits to all case-study areas 2.3 Refinement and finalisation of design, plan, instruments, and write-up format	Finalised research design Finalised sample Research timeline Finalised research instruments, data storage and write-up strategy Agreed programme of work & responsibilities Agreed communications and reporting plan
Phase III Fieldwork Nov 2015–March 2016	3.1 Case study data collection 3.2 Review workshop	Sets of audio-files, interview & observation notes on agreed analytical templates for all respondents in each case study

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presentation of preliminary data on case-study schools and SHGs - data quality review & data sharing - discussion of emergent findings - revision of analytical templates & development of analytical themes - identification of support needs - troubleshooting - revision of timelines and forward planning 	
Phase IV Analysis & write-up April–August 2016	4.1 Collection of outstanding data 4.2 Analysis & write-up workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presentation of case-studies & supplementary data - refinement of analytical themes - relating relevant survey to qualitative data - development of report format & delivery dates - preparation for dissemination activities 4.3 Preparation of final report on Speed School graduate experiences & SHGs	Four case-study reports (on Link Schools, Speed School graduates & SHGs) in standardised format Outline of synthesis report Synthesis research report
Phase V Dissemination	See overall research design	

3.5. Study sample

Four Link Schools that have high levels of Speed School children attending were selected through progressive purposive sampling, in consultation with GGE. The sample woredas were selected before the case-study schools, then the focus SHGs and the school grade, from which Speed School graduates and the SHGs were invited to participate, as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Sample woreda, school and target years for Speed School graduates and SHGs

Woreda	Shebedino	Shebedino	Loka Abaya	Silti
School*	Hetto	Hanja	Arishi	Teff
Focus Grade for Speed School Graduates	7	7	5	5
SHG (Focus year(s))	2011/2012	2011/2012	2014/2015 2015/2016	2013/2014 2015/2016
Rurality	30–45mins mins south of Hawassa but on the main road	30–45 mins south of Hawassa, but on the main road	1.5–2hrs from Hawassa – no phone coverage	4hrs– 4hrs30m northwest of Hawassa – no phone coverage

* Pseudonyms have been chosen and distances from Hawassa are imprecise to protect the school's anonymity

Silti was chosen as one woreda, after GGE informed us that SHGs were generally working well there, in order to learn from good practice. Being a predominantly Muslim area, and one as close to the capital, Addis Ababa, as to Hawassa, it was also thought to provide a useful contrast with the Christian-dominated woredas further south. Since Silti entailed overnight stays closer to the research site, it was necessary for practical reasons to select other research sites that were within easy reach from Hawassa, which therefore limited the choice of woredas to Sidama Zone. Two schools were chosen in Shebedino Woreda on account of it being one of the programme's original woredas of operation. In addition, the mature SHGs would contrast with the newly formed SHGs of Silti. Since the Speed School

Programme had completed operations in Shebedino, we identified a final woreda where the programme was still operating, which was within reach of Hawassa, and could provide a more remote rural school, resulting in the selection of Loka Abaya.

3.6 Case-study schools

The case-study Link Schools were also selected with the assistance of GGE, according to the following criteria spread across the sample:

- Schools possessing high numbers of Speed School graduates;
- Two schools where the programme was still active;
- Schools that were hosting or had formerly hosted Speed School classes, since it was assumed school staff would have greater familiarity with the Speed School programme;
- School management that was willing to engage with the research;
- At least two schools that were at least 30 minutes' drive off a main road.

Although all four case-study schools were classified as rural, the two in Loka Abaya and Silti were more rural, as they both had no phone coverage and were a greater distance from a main road (see Table 3.2). In contrast, the two Shebedino schools were located close to the main, partially tarred, road south from Hawassa (the Ethio-Kenya Highway), and were more peri-urban in character. One Link School originally intended for selection in Shebedino was substituted after the pilot visit since there was no management presence (despite having made arrangements for the visit with the principal), very little teaching and learning going on, and no spare classrooms or trees with shade where interviews could be conducted. A brief description of each site follows:

Arishi Primary School¹¹

Arishi Primary School is located about 1hr 30–2 hours drive southwest of Hawassa in Loka Abaya Woreda. The area survives on mixed agriculture – coffee, *enset*, cereals and root crops predominate, but it is increasingly prone to drought. This has inevitably had knock-on effects on schooling: the decrease in agricultural productivity has resulted in less money and food for families; in addition, students have been absent from school in order to look after siblings while parents are forced to move livestock in search of water further away.

The school itself was established in the 1970s and operates a double shift with a moderate intake of around 1800 students. 120 of these are former Speed School graduates. Enrolment numbers have decreased over the last four years (see Table 3.3), but there have been persistently more boys than girls at school (boys 53.7%, girls 46.3%, for 2015/2016), though in terms of the Speed School graduates, girls are in the majority (57.5%).

Arishi Primary School faces numerous problems. Although it is set in relatively pleasant surroundings and with sufficient classrooms, it otherwise lacks resources: classrooms are in poor condition, as are the library, Science lab and pedagogic centre, and there's a shortage of textbooks in some subjects. The school also lacks strong community support and strong leadership and management. Teachers are suffering from low morale and there's widespread teacher and student absenteeism and late-coming, and poor classroom management by some teachers, as well as ineffective pedagogy by many.

Hanja Primary School

Located in Shebedino Woreda, in Sidama Zone, close to the Ethio-Kenya Highway, about 30–45 minutes south of Hawassa, is Hanja Primary School. The school lies in a cash crop area (coffee and *khat*), offering income-generating opportunities for boys in particular, which has an adverse effect on school attendance and retention. Early marriage also affects many girls in the area. There is fairly

¹¹ The names of the schools have been changed to preserve their anonymity

strong community support and the PSTA in particular is said to be working with school management to address these issues.

The school, which was established in the 1980s, operates a double shift and is a mid-ranking primary school within the woreda. It has had a fairly steady intake of around 1500 over the last four years; while earlier there were more girls attending than boys (54% to 46% in 2013/2014) over the last two years there has been roughly gender parity in enrolments (see Table 3.3). Students live fairly locally with none walking more than 30 minutes to reach school.

The school itself is well managed, and well supported by the PSTA. Teacher absenteeism and late-coming are confined to relatively few teachers, though pedagogy and student feedback on work and student support in general could be much better. Set in pleasant, neat, shady grounds, classroom facilities were slightly better than in Arishi, with textbook shortages only for some classes and a pedagogy centre that was better equipped with teaching aids. However, rooms were still dark with bare walls, and not regularly cleaned; though not as dilapidated, some boards were still in poor condition.

Hetto Primary School

Also in Shebedino Woreda not far from the Ethio-Kenya Highway, and about 30–45 minutes south of Hawassa, is Hetto Primary School. As in Hanja, school enrolment is adversely affected by the school's location in a cash crop area (coffee and *khat*) and its proximity to a major *khat*-trading town, which are major factors in student absenteeism and dropout. The school is making efforts with the PSTA and KETB to address the matter.

One of the oldest schools in the zone, established in the 1950s, Hetto is a large school of about 3000 students, which attend in a double shift; some students travel over 1hr 20mins to reach school. Numbers have decreased very slightly over the last four years and there are more girls (51.5%) than boys (48.5%) though the gender ratio in enrolment has fluctuated over the four-year period (see Table 3.3). Out of the 200 Speed School graduates from the three years of the programme's operation within the kebele that originally fed into Hetto, only 37 now remain; the rest are said to have transferred to others schools and, in some cases, dropped out.

Hetto Primary School is relatively well resourced; indeed resources, and student access to resources, especially in terms of the library, Science lab and teaching aids improved dramatically from the first to the second semester as the school was competing to become one of the woreda's model schools. However, the school is not without its problems: high teacher turnover, high levels of teacher absenteeism and late-coming, large class sizes and variable levels of feedback on student work. In addition, community attitudes towards education were said to have deteriorated in recent years for various reasons though the PSTA and KETB were trying to mobilise support.

Teff Primary School

Located in Silti Woreda in Silte Zone in the north of SNNPR, Teff Primary School is about 15–20km from the woreda town. In contrast to the Protestant Christian populations of the other three schools, Teff's intake is entirely Muslim. The school is in a kebele that benefits from a few prosperous individuals, including some who send remittances back from Saudi Arabia. *Teff* is the major agricultural crop and here, as elsewhere in the zone, there is a strong tradition of trading – students miss class to engage in *khat* trading, and to help with family agricultural activities.

Established in the 1980s, the school is one of the top-performing schools in the woreda, with relatively better facilities. It had an intake of over 1300 in 2015/2016 as enrolments have been increasing steadily from around 1100 over the last four years (see Table 3.3). Although at the start of the research period, it operated a double shift, the construction of new classrooms enabled it to change to a single shift in

the second semester. The new classrooms are just one example of the strong support given by the community, which possesses a very active PSTA and KETB. There is also strong interaction with woreda officials. The level of teacher professionalism in the school is better than in the other case-study schools, though teacher motivation is still said to be an issue and the quality of teaching and student feedback could also be greatly improved.

Consistently over the last four years, a higher proportion of the intake has been male – 56.8% in 2015/2016, though a slightly higher proportion of the 110 Speed School graduates are female (48.2%). Girls' education is said not to be valued as highly as boys' by some sections of the community and there is a culture of early marriage. Migration to Saudi Arabia is another challenge the school faces.

Table 3.3 Enrolment trends in the case-study schools 2012/2013 (E.C. 2005)–2015/2016 (E.C. 2008)

Level	2012/2013 (E.C. 2005)			2013/2014 (E.C. 2006)			2014/2015 (E.C. 2007)			2015/2016 (E.C. 2008)		
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total
ARISHI	989 (47.7)	1085 (52.3)	2074 (100)	810 (48.9)	846 (51.1)	1656 (100)	Data not available ¹²			842 (46.3)	976 (53.7)	1818 (100)
HANJA	775 (52.4)	704 (47.6)	1479 (100)	851 (54.0)	724 (46.0)	1575 (100)	763 (49.8)	769 (50.2)	1532 (100)	753 (50.0)	754 (50.0)	1507 (100)
HETTO	1603 (51.2)	1509 (48.2)	3132 (100)	1491 (49.2)	1539 (50.8)	3030 (100)	1388 (49.5)	1417 (50.5)	2805 (100)	1596 (51.5)	1503 (48.5)	3099 (100)
TEFF	525 (45.0)	641 (55.0)	1166 (100)	Data not available			582 (45.7)	692 (54.3)	1274 (100)	600 (43.9)	776 (56.8)	1366 (100)

Speed School graduates

Although GGE has fairly comprehensive tracking data on Speed School graduates (except where a woreda refused to allow tracking), the case-study schools were only able to provide limited data on numbers. These are presented in Tables 3.4 and 3.5 below. During the research period 2015/2016 (E.C. 2008) the Shebedino schools Hanja and Hetto were in their fourth year of having Speed School graduates in the school, though Hanja could only provide data for two years and Hetto could only provide data for one. Similarly, Arishi and Teff, which were both in their second year of receiving Speed School graduates, were only able to provide researchers with the 2015/2016 data. It is worth highlighting that Hanja's Speed School graduate numbers dropped by 33%, from 40 in 2014/2015 (E.C. 2007) to 27 in 2015/2016, (see Table 3.4), though a former facilitator said this was due to students transferring to other schools rather than dropping out. Notably, 43% of the female graduates from 2014/2015 did not re-register in Hanja the following year. The lack of data for multiple years from the other three schools makes it impossible to make similar comparisons. However, one observation can be made about grade assignment. Given the years of the programme's operation in Shebedino, you would expect the bulk of Hanja and Hetto's graduates in 2015/2016 (E.C. 2008) to be concentrated in Grades 5–7, if students had been successful and were progressing through the grades. In Arishi and Teff, in contrast, you would expect the two years of intake from Speed School classes to be concentrated in Grades 4 and 5. In three of the schools, students were found to be in the expected grades, but in Arishi just under half were in Grades 2 and 3 – lower grades than would be expected. In an informal discussion held in pilot visits, a teacher of Grades 1–4 stated that many graduates had been underage and lacked the basic academic skills for the grade they were supposed to join in the Link School, so were placed in Grades 2 and 3 and even in Grade 1. In contrast, two students in Hanja were actually in Grade 8, apparently because they were given a double promotion for their extraordinary academic achievement. The research follow-up survey will no doubt shed light on enrolment and dropout trends and the issue of grade assignment and progression.

¹² Note that "data not available" refers to the school's inability to provide the data; they may have been available at the woreda office, and the GGE office had its own records, derived from the schools.

Table 3.4 Speed School graduate enrolments by grade in Hanja & Hetto 2014/15 – 2015/16 (E.C. 2007–2008)

Grade	HANJA 2014/2015 (E.C. 2007)			HANJA 2015/2016 (E.C. 2008)			HETTO 2014/2015 (E.C. 2007)			HETTO 2015/2016 (E.C. 2008)		
	F	M	TOTAL	F	M	TOTAL	F	M	TOTAL	F	M	TOTAL
G 1	0	0	0	0	0	0				0	0	0
G 2	0	0	0	0	0	0				0	0	0
G 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	Data not available			0	0	0
G 4	3	1	4	0	0	0				0	0	0
G 5	13	8	21	1	2	3				7	9	16
G 6	4	9	13	6	7	13				7	6	13
G 7	1	1	2	4	5	9				2	6	8
G 8	0	0	0	1	1	2				0	0	0
TOTAL	21	19	40	12	15	27				16	21	37

Table 3.5 Speed School graduate enrolments by grade in Arishi & Teff 2015/16 (E.C. 2008)

Level	ARISHI			TEFF		
	F	M	TOTAL	F	M	TOTAL
G 1	2	1	3	0	0	0
G 2	20	14	34	0	0	0
G 3	16	7	23	0	0	0
G 4	20	20	40	39	31	70
G 5	11	9	20	14	26	40
G 6	0	0	0	0	0	0
G 7	0	0	0	0	0	0
G 8	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	69	51	120	53	57	110

Focus grades, Speed School graduates & SHGs

In each case-study Link School a grade was initially chosen that could provide a class with sufficient groups of 4–6 former Speed School girls and boys to interview. When selecting the specific classes, consideration was also given to whether it included children from mothers in the focus SHG year, and preferably from one of the functioning SHGs.

Originally, the female and male students for group interviews were to be selected from the same class, but the need for interpreters to undertake the lesson observation (since even in the second cycle grades the local languages were often used as the MOI; see Chapter 2, Section 2.8, on *Medium of instruction*) would have meant four observers in the classroom, which would have been too disruptive. We therefore identified two separate focus classes from the same grade: one for the female student sample, one for the male sample. Having researchers work with two separate classes also allowed for more lesson observations to be carried out than were originally planned. From these group interviews involving 35 students, 16 focus students were selected for individual in-depth interviews, four from each school (two female, two male). The original aim had been to select two high-performing and two low-performing Speed School graduates from each class, but the low numbers in each class, compounded by the difficulty of accessing Speed School students at all (especially in the schools lacking telephone communication or where student and teacher attendance was poor), meant that student availability and willingness to participate predominantly determined the sample.

The student interviewees, sometimes with the help of a Speed School facilitator, helped identify and locate Speed School graduates who had dropped out of the Link Schools. The original intention was to interview eight: two from each school (one female, one male), but in the end only four respondents willing to be interviewed could be located.

Six SHGs were selected from the case-study schools. As far as possible, we tried to select ones that included mothers of the focus Speed School students that were still in the Link Schools. We also required SHGs at various stages of development. We selected two Shebedino SHGs that had been running the whole duration of the project since 2011/2012, in accordance with the student selection. In addition, two SHGs (in two of the four schools) were included that started in 2015/2016, so that the whole process of start-up, training and development could be documented through its initial year. The original aim was to have a group interview of 5–6 members from the SHGs including committee and non-committee members. However, interviews in the scoping visit and initial pilot visits informed us that the committee members, who were generally more confident women of higher social status (e.g. the wife of the PSTA chair) dominated the discussion and ordinary members would barely speak; it was also apparent that there were sometimes divisions between committee members and ordinary members; for example in one group in the scoping study, the ordinary members had asked for the seed money to be distributed once they had saved the requisite amount to make the most of low prices; however, the committee had agreed with the IP that perhaps it would be better to wait as some members might stop saving. This issue is discussed further later. Thus, for each focus SHG we eventually determined to interview only the committee in the group interview and to select at least one ordinary member for the two individual interviews.

Study respondents

Respondents for each case study were from five broad categories:

- Speed School graduates, the majority still in a link school, as well as some drop-outs;
- School staff, including either the principal or vice-principal and teachers of the classes observed;
- IP staff, including the TO, CM and a facilitator;
- SHG members, including committee and non-committee members;
- Local government officials at kebele and woreda level, including school supervisors, micro-finance officers, women's affairs officers and members of the KETB and PSTA.

In addition, four senior officers of Geneva Global Ethiopia were interviewed.

Table 3.6 gives details of the respondents who were interviewed from all four case studies. In some instances, there was overlap in respondents; for example, the school supervisor or the TO was the same for more than one school, in which case, the person is only counted once in the table.

Table 3.6 Total respondents interviewed from the case studies

Respondents	Case-study Link School				TOTAL
	Hetto	Hanja	Arishi	Teff	
Woreda/kebele officials (including KETB & PSTA members, school supervisor, & women's affairs officers)	3	2	4	4	13
Microfinance agent (Woreda or kebele)	1	1	0	1	3
School (principal/vice-principal; teachers)	3	3	3	3	12
Speed School graduates (in-school)	4 (M:4)	8 (F:4; M:4)	12 (F:6; M:6)	11 (F:6; M:5)	35 (F:16;M:19)
Speed School graduates (dropouts)	1 (M:1)	1 (M:1)	2 (F:1; M:1)	0	4 (F:1; M:3)
SHG members	5	5	7	8	25
IP personnel (including TO, CM, facilitators)	1	3	3	3	10
GGE senior staff	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4
TOTAL	18	23	31	30	106

3.7 Research methods

The predominantly ethnographic research methods included:

- Individual and group interviews with former Speed School students in the Link Schools, including those still in school and some who have dropped out.
- Observations of former Speed School students in class and around the Link School in formal and informal situations on repeated school visits;
- Individual and group interviews with SHG members, both committee and non-committee members;
- Observations of an SHG meeting and a woreda-level training session;
- Individual interviews with Link School staff, local government (at woreda or kebele level) and community leaders who are involved in the Speed School programme and the SHGs in some capacity.
- Individual interviews with implementing partner (IP) staff members in the three woredas – Training Officers (TOs) and the Community Mobilizers (CMs) for the Link Schools, as well as Speed School facilitators;
- In addition, documentary data were collected about the case-study Link Schools and communities, including EMIS stats and IP reports;

The methods are described in further detail below and the instruments are in Appendices I–IV. Appendix Ia provides a list of the instruments.

Interviews

The interviews were held in Amharic¹³, or in a mix of Amharic and Siltigna (when in Silti) or in Amharic and in Sidamu Afoo when in Shebedino or Loka Abaya. Although Amharic is the official/national language in Ethiopia, and indeed the official MOI for Grades 1–4 in schools in Hawassa, some of the respondents, notably most of the women in the SHG and the Speed School graduates, were not able to communicate in Amharic. Since neither of the two Hawassa researchers spoke either Sidamu Afoo or Siltigna, the first languages of most respondents, interpreters were employed who could translate from these languages into Amharic.

All interviews were taped except where respondents declined to be recorded, or in the couple of instances when the recording equipment failed. Where possible, the female Hawassa researcher and interpreter interviewed female students, and the male researcher and interpreter interviewed the male students.

The group interviews (see Table 3.7) with the former Speed School students and the SHG members were used both to inform the discussion topics for the individual interviews, and to select the individual members for in-depth interviews, although ordinary SHG members (not from the group interviews) were also included in the SHG sample.

Students were interviewed after they had been observed in class to give concrete experiences around which to base some of the interview. Similarly, teachers were interviewed after they had been observed teaching in class, and school managers (principal or vice-principal) were interviewed – sometimes more than once – after some time had been spent in the school and most of the observations and interviews had taken place, so that clarification could be sought on particular issues and more context-specific questions could be included in the interview.

¹³ The instruments, including the interview schedules, were all devised in English, but some interview schedules were partially/wholly translated into Amharic by the main researchers.

Table 3.7 Number of group interviews by respondent group

Sample	Number	Description
SHG	6	One for each SHG (including the three committee members)
Students	7 ¹⁴	Two per school: 1 female group; 1 male group, with 4–6 students per group
Total	13	

In total, 63 individual interviews were conducted with respondents, as detailed in Table 3.8. Informal ‘chats’ were also held at various times with the same respondents and others, which included other teachers, community members, facilitators etc.

Table 3.8 Number of individual interviews by respondent group

Sample	Number	Description
SHG	8	In-depth interviews with SHG members selected from the group interviews: 2 per SHG group (at least one being an ordinary member) ¹⁵ .
Former Speed School students	14 ¹⁶	In-depth interviews with students, 4 per school (2 female, 2 male).
Speed School graduate dropouts	4	In-depth interviews with former Speed School students who have dropped out (1 male student in each school; one female student in one school)
Link School teachers	8	Interviews with Link School teachers whose classes were observed (2 per school).
Link School principals	4	Interviews with Link School principals or vice-principals (1 per school).
Woreda/kebele officers	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woreda school supervisors for the Link Schools Woreda/kebele women’s officer (whichever knew more about the programme) Woreda/kebele micro-finance officer (whichever knew more about the programme) PSTA members Kebele officials on the KETB.
IPs	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 interviews with CMs (one for each school with one CM covering two schools) 3 interviews with the TO, 1 for each of the IPs involved; 4 interviews with facilitators/former facilitators, 1 from each school.
Geneva Global	4	Interviews with 4 senior GGE staff
Total	65	

¹⁴ The group interview did not happen since the only two female students from the Grade 7 class were absent during the school visits; in the second semester visits, the decision was made to focus on the individual interviews. See Note 13, below.

¹⁵ A misunderstanding between the IP and the research team over the purpose of the research caused two interviews to be terminated prematurely in one site.

¹⁶ In Hetto, female student voices are absent: one interview tape was corrupted and in the second case, the student did not show up for the interview on more than one occasion, and by the second semester had dropped out.

Observations

In total 16 formal lesson observations were made across the four schools. Four formal observations were made in each school, two of each focus class. They gave some indication of the quality of learning experiences that students were being exposed to in the school, but also provided concrete examples to refer to in interviews with both with students and school staff. Observation schedules (see Appendix II) were used by both researchers and interpreters, who then conferred, to provide one agreed write-up for each observed lesson. The schedules had been piloted and revised during the research methods workshop. Interpreters were needed because although the official MOI of Grade 4 onwards is English, in practice a lot of the local language is used, sometimes code-switching with Amharic and/or English. Interpreters were also able to pick up the unofficial chat of students in class, which always occurred in the local language. As educational professionals, they were able to comment on the pedagogical aspects of the lesson too.

Observations round the school were ongoing. In addition to completing the school observation schedule, researchers took field notes on other observations and informal conversations during all the visits, which were then discussed at the analysis workshop and compiled into one school observation report per school.

Observations of SHGs proved much more difficult. Of the two woreda-level trainings scheduled for the year, only one took place. SHG meetings were even more difficult to observe, either because they were no longer happening, or because they were organised in an ad-hoc, last-minute way, and at a school with no network coverage (see Section 3.7 on *Limitations of the research*). In the end, one SHG meeting was organised especially for a researcher to attend.

Table 3.9 Number of observations¹⁷

Sample	Number	Description
Lessons	16	Lessons containing the focus Speed School graduates (2 observations per class, 2 classes per school)
Schools	4	Ongoing observations of each school on multiple visits
SHG meetings	1	SHG meetings
Woreda-level SHG training	1	Woreda-level SHG training sessions for the SHG office bearers in the two woredas where the programme is still operational
Total	28	

Documentary data

There were limited available documentary data available from schools and SHGs (see Appendix III). Basic EMIS data were sought from the schools for the last four years. In addition, enrolment figures were requested for the Speed School graduates, for comparison. Significantly, not all the schools were able to provide the data. Reasons given included both copies of the data being sent to the woreda office, and a change of school management. Where possible, photographs were taken of attendance registers, though schools were reluctant to grant access to attendance records. Programme documents from GGE were also consulted.

¹⁷ Ongoing school observations of school practices such as assemblies, break time, pupils' arrival at school in the morning, visitors and outsiders etc. Observations were also made of the immediate surrounding area.

Table 3.10 Types of documentary data

	Description
For students' experiences	EMIS and other school-level data on student enrolments, repetition, attendance, performance etc. School profiles regarding school infrastructure and facilities, staffing, school duties, disciplinary practices. Checking of school registers, focus students' exercise books
For SHGs	Documentary data from the two functioning SHGs: minutes (if any) of recent meetings, account books, deposit books
Speed School programme in general	Speed School programme guides and SHG manuals

3.8 Analysis

For the interviews, the researchers listened to the interview recordings more than once and typed up the key points and salient quotes, into the standardised analytical templates (see Appendix IV). The initial analytical categories were guided by the research aims and questions, but were subsequently amended and expanded during the review workshop after preliminary engagement with some of the data.

School and classroom observation notes were first summarised and condensed, before being incorporated into the analysis. The four classroom observations were combined into one summary analytical observation template for each school (see Appendix IV), which has also been piloted and amended during the initial research methods workshop. In contrast, observation notes made in and around the school were combined with information from informal conversations, which were recorded in field notes by the researchers over the various research visits to the school and community. Observation notes were subsequently combined and written up into the same composite analytical template under the thematic headings used for the interviews – one report per school. Photographs were also taken of school facilities and surroundings after permission had been sought from the school management.

The templates for each interview and the composite observation templates and school profile form were printed out to enable comparison. For each case study, interview templates were first analysed within respondent groups (e.g. students, government officials, SHG members) and then across respondent groups, in relation to each sub-topic of the analytical template, which in turn formed the sub-headings of the case-study reports.

Once the draft case-study reports (written up according to an agreed template) had been circulated among the core members of the research team, a workshop was held to undertake the cross-case analysis, comparing the four case-study Link Schools in relation to the original research questions and identifying any general cross-cutting themes. Drafts of the main report and case-study reports were also circulated more widely among team members for comment and editing. The case-study reports have not been included here in the appendices to protect the anonymity of the participants.

3.9 Limitations

Data-gathering in the field always presents logistical challenges that result in differences between the intended data collection described in the research and the actual data collected. In this case, the three key practical constraints hindering the research were communications, language and time, with the first two factors having a huge impact on the third.

As regards **communications**, there were several aspects to this challenge. First, the lack of telephone coverage in the two most rural schools meant that researchers were unable to contact respondents in between visits to make arrangements, or remind participants of their imminent arrival; conversely, respondents were unable to get in touch with researchers to advise of any change in their plans, with the result that researchers made numerous time-consuming visits to schools and were unable to meet the person they had arranged to interview. A prime example was when the whole research team arrived for the first full research visit to Silti (involving a four-hour drive and overnight stay), only to find the school shut: woreda officials had arrived at the principal's office the day before and closed the school for the week to enable the students to help with the *teff* harvest. In addition, lack of network coverage particularly affected the researchers' ability to attend SHG meetings in Silti and Loka Abaya, as they were often organised in a last-minute, ad-hoc way.

Even where there was network coverage, researchers often arrived at the school or office to find the respondent they had agreed to meet was not there, and had not communicated this to the researcher, and so the interview had to be rescheduled, or, when time ran out, abandoned. Communication among the research team members was also difficult and time-consuming: one Hawassa researcher was actually based in Addis Ababa, and not Hawassa for much of the time, and there was a seven-hour time difference between Ethiopia and the Caribbean, where the Sussex researcher was based. This resulted in limited face-to-face contact time. Communication within the team was further compounded by poor telephone and internet connectivity.

Language difficulties also resulted in significant practical and methodological limitations. Practically speaking, translating between Siltigna or Sidamu Afoo and Amharic (and occasionally English) was time-consuming and inevitably meant that less ground could be covered in interviews, or that interviews were very long (some around two hours). In some of the more dynamic group interviews in particular, some of the complexity of the discussion is likely to have been lost in the translation. To address this, the original intention was to have all interviews transcribed into Amharic (and some into English as well) before beginning analysis. However, a combination of time constraints – the data-gathering took much longer than anticipated for the reasons given above – non-availability of translators, and the poor quality of the pilot translations we eventually did commission, forced a rethink. Instead, two of the interpreters we worked with in the field were invited to work with the research team at the review workshop (and later where necessary), listening to tapes of interviews that on first hearing the field researchers felt were particularly data-rich, and/or where the initial translation into Amharic seemed cursory in comparison with amount of Sidamu Afoo or Siltigna spoken. Although an absence of high quality transcriptions inevitably affected the data quality, the fall-back plan did enable researchers and interpreters to recover information that was missed at the time of the interview. On the plus side too, the researcher could further negotiate meaning with the interpreter, and could tease out more nuanced quotes from the interviews, while the interpreters' more general contributions to the workshop, given that they were from the research areas (but not the specific communities), helped enrich other aspects of the data analysis.

Regarding the respondents themselves, there is an **under-representation of female Speed School graduates** for Hetto school on account of a combination of corrupted audio files and student respondent no-shows, **and of Speed School graduates who had dropped out of the Link School**, as they proved very difficult to trace. Importantly, a **high proportion of the focus Speed School graduates had not been selected from the intended target group** (i.e. had not previously been school drop-outs or overage non-entrants; see Section 5.1). As regards the SHG interviewees, although some of the ordinary SHG members interviewed were clearly extremely poor, the committee members of the SHGs, though poor, were generally of higher socio-economic status, with greater access to financial resources. Examples included an SHG treasurer in a pilot interview being the wife of the PSTA chair; an SHG treasurer in Hanja could read and write, had one child in university and had a small coffee plantation and shop. In Arishi, the chair of one of the SHGs had reached Grade 9, could read and write,

and had a daughter who had lived in rented accommodation in town in order to study. In one SHG group in Arishi, all three committee members participated in *equb* groups that saved ETB20–50 per week. This has implications for how the results of this study should be interpreted. Students with slightly higher social and economic capital at home are more likely to be able to remain in school and be successful. Similarly, mothers with slightly higher social and economic capital are more likely to derive greater financial benefit from the SHGs as they may have more disposable income to save and invest. Ultra-poor mothers, in contrast, are more likely to have to spend any income on satisfying basic needs, as some of the interviews confirmed. Therefore, while this study offers many insights into Link School students' and SHG members' experiences, it tells us less about the *most vulnerable* SHG members, and the Speed School graduates and other students *most at risk of dropping out* from the Link Schools, which future research should focus on.

The contextual **EMIS data also proved problematic**; in addition to missing data for various years across the sample, there were several sets of highly improbable figures, such as no dropouts recorded for one year in Teff, and no repeaters in another year, or no students being recorded as overage in 2015/2016 in Arishi, despite there having been 281 recorded two years previously. In addition, there were numerous inconsistencies or improbabilities, particularly across specific grade cohorts in terms of reconciling numbers of enrolments with figures for dropouts, re-admittances, repeaters and overage students. Attendance and performance data were not made available to the research team across the sample, except in one school where some performance data were shown to the researchers but it was not possible to extract the figures relevant to the Speed School graduates. On account of the amount of incomplete, improbable and/or inconsistent EMIS data provided by the schools, it proved impossible to present any meaningful analysis in this report, beyond noting their incompleteness and unreliability, and the need to treat such figures with caution. This is clearly a widespread issue – as the FMoE acknowledges, and which has implications for GGE's tracking of Speed School graduates:

An inadequate EMIS at woreda and school levels is characterised by limited capacity in the collection, analysis and use of educational data and information; lack of staff with required skills; and poor ICT infrastructure (FMoE, 2015: 27).

Consequently, in Section 3.6, we have only presented the enrolment figures supplied by the schools, to provide some context for the presentation of the qualitative data.

A shortcoming in the design is that we included **no research question** – and no questions in the interview schedules – **that specifically addressed the effectiveness of the Link School capacity development programme** because during the initial research scoping visit, we were led to believe that it had been abandoned, though the reason for its reported demise was not clear. However, as the programme eventually came up in interviews in one school and with some GGE staff, we can offer some insights on the issue.

Generalizability

As with all case-study research, it is important to address **the issue of generalizability** since there should always be caution about generalising and universalising findings and strategies from the particular context to the general (Usher 1996). However, although we have focused on only four case-study schools, the fact that the schools are spread across three different woredas and two zones, and are of differing degrees of rurality and size indicates that we have explored a variety of contexts. Importantly, the study included interviews with kebele and woreda officials, as well as IP and GGE respondents, whose experiences extend beyond the case-study sites, enabling us to highlight issues of more general application. That said, it is worth noting that the three woredas involved were in important cash crop areas, which probably increases the likelihood of student absenteeism and or/drop out to earn money, especially at harvest time. At the same time, while this report offers important insights into some areas of SNNPR, we are aware that social contexts of Oromia, Tigray and Amhara are different again. For this reason, in the analysis and presentation of findings we draw on a

wider range of sources (policy documents, survey data and other empirical studies) within SNNPR, other geographical regions within Ethiopia, and even more broadly within other contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa, to suggest connections beyond the case studies themselves.

3.10 Ethical issues

Rigorous ethical clearance for this study was granted by both the University of Hawassa and the University of Sussex. In addition, ethics were included in the initial research methods training workshop, including the importance of respondent confidentiality and anonymity. There was also debate about whether or not to pay respondents, which the local interpreters and Ethiopian researchers said would be expected by community members, to compensate them for their time. This may relate in part to likely “research fatigue,” on the part of respondents, which researchers on CSOs noted in their study (see Gebreselassie *et al.*, 2012). The Ethiopian research team members, after consulting with the local interpreters, agreed on types of compensation for time given to facilitating and/or taking part in the research (in cash and/or in kind) to different respondents, ensuring consistency both for reasons of equity, and to avoid jealousy among respondents. Participants were not told of the compensation, however, until after they had agreed to participate.

All participants involved in this research were given research briefs explaining the aims of the research, the methods to be employed and how the resulting data will be used. The research brief for the participants was produced in both English and Amharic (see Appendix V), with explanations given verbally in Sidamu Afoo and Siltigna, via translators, where necessary. Informed consent was then sought from all participants individually (see Appendix V), and for the students we also asked for consent from the schools. Respondents’ identity and confidentiality is protected by using pseudonyms for the schools and the focus students and mothers, by collectivising some of the quotes (e.g. attributing a quote to a government official rather than specifying the woreda school supervisor), and generally focusing on what people do and say rather than who they are. In addition, it was decided not to include the individual case-study reports in this synthesis report since it was impossible to protect the anonymity of some respondents.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS: SHGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we synthesise the case-study findings regarding the mother's self-help groups. First, we consider the operationalisation of the programme, including its aim, and to what extent it is generating income for mothers. Then, we consider what effect participation has had on mothers' attitude to education and their ability to support their children's education. The recommendations about how the SHG programme could operate more effectively are made in Chapter 6.

In the six focus SHGs across the four case-study sites, **the SHG experience was generally viewed positively by participants**, though primarily for the education their children received in the Speed School, rather than the economic benefits of the savings group. This was mainly due to the numerous implementation challenges encountered in the SHG component of the Speed School programme, which resulted in **the vast majority of the SHGs in the case-study sites failing to continue beyond the Speed School year**.

SHGs varied across sites in their mode of operation and the types of investment they engaged in. **Their success depended on a variety of interlinked factors: the levels of support they received both during and after the Speed School year; the degree of ownership they had in the investment; the amount of seed money received and the timing of its disbursement; the women's previous experience of business; their socio-economic status; the culture of the community; the levels of trust and commitment among group members; the expectations of the SHG members; and the geographical spread of the group members.**

4.2 Operationalisation of SHGs

RQ 1 How are SHGs operating in practice?

The aims, objectives and procedures of the SHG programme are set out in the GGE SHG Supervisors' Manual produced in 2011 (Armado, 2011), which was revised in 2015 (GGE, 2015). It is beyond the scope of this study to offer a critique of these documents; however, a few points need to be made with regards to the stated aims of SHGs and the underlying assumptions, as well as the overambitious procedural timeline.

Aim of SHGs

The aim of the SHG component of the programme as articulated in the original Speed School Manual is as follows:

The aim of the SHGs is not directly to alleviate poverty ... [but] is to foster self-help activities at the household level and enable dropout children [to] resume their education. (Armado, 2011: 8).

Arguably, all self-help activities aim to improve the economic situation of the participants to some degree. Moreover, the manual then emphasises that the potential economic benefits of SHGs are the main consideration whereas the potential social benefits are of secondary importance. The issue of empowerment is also raised (pp. 35 & 39). The revised *2015 Speed School Manual*, however, articulates the following aim, giving equal emphasis to the potential financial and social benefits of the SHGs:

[to improve] the income-generating capacity of families so that children can attend school and [foster] overall community development (p.8)

GGE and IP staff similarly highlighted the fact that unlike other SHGs, the Geneva Global SHG programme does not aim to achieve poverty alleviation and economic empowerment per se, but rather aims to enable the mothers, through the SHGs, to earn enough money to support their children's education after the Speed School year:

They [SHGs] are meant to support the mother to enable them to support their children's education, not to economically empower them and start big businesses. (GGE respondent)

The SHG support aims mainly to support them after the Speed School year as the project itself supports them during the Speed School year. (GGE respondent)

The [main] objective of the program is not the SHG it is ALFA [Speed School]. Other projects' objective is in economic empowerment. ... Other programmes' focus is on economics but in Geneva Global it is the children's education which is the focus. (IP respondent)

We start the SHG not for the mother, but for the child. (GGE respondent)

GGE respondents calculated the cost of supporting the child's education as follows:

The assumption and the calculation we did some four years back is that a child needs at least 70 Birr for a year to buy exercise books and pens and those kinds of things. (GGE respondent)

[The] calculation [is] that a mother should start a business and be in a position to generate income ... should make a profit of at least 70 Birr to cover the one child's educational costs. (GGE respondent)

The aim would therefore seem to be to enable mothers to make enough money to cover the direct costs of schooling for the Speed School child to complete their primary schooling (Grade 8). This, however, ignores the fact that many of the mothers are struggling to support other school-age children too (see for example Table 4.2), and that family finances are not necessarily divided out on a child-by-child basis; nor do women necessarily have full financial control of the money they earn (Gobezie, 2010; Gebreselassie, 2012; UN Women, 2015). What's more, there was no mention made by GGE or IP respondents about the SHG revenue covering the opportunity costs of keeping the child in the Link School; these are likely to increase as the earning potential of the child for the family increases, especially for boys.

Another point is that the within the SHG programme – as is clear both from the manual and from some of the respondent quotes above – **poverty is primarily conceptualised in economic terms**; a broader understanding (outlined in Chapter 3), which includes issues of time, health and social relations, for example, might prompt reconsideration of the demands on time that the SHG programme makes of the SHG participants in terms of meetings, and question whether providing money for books and stationery is sufficient to enable a child to successfully continue their studies in the Link School.

At the same time, **there was widespread recognition** among GGE and IP staff **that ten months is not long enough for the SHG groups to mature**, even with training – which, our study suggests, many have not received. It may have been acknowledgement of the overly short timeframe, therefore, that prompted a couple of respondents to state that whatever the expressed aim of the SHG programme, **a more realistic expected outcome for SHG participants is attitudinal change towards education – where it was not positive before – and an established culture of saving:**

With ten months, the most important thing with the self-help group is bringing attitudinal change of the mother towards the education of her child. With this training – giving training to the mothers – one important [thing] is the importance of education for the child. The change which the mother shows towards the education of her child is an important one. ... Another – mothers' understanding about education benefits other children in the family. And [a] knock-on effect on attitudinal change among other family members. (GGE respondent)

I say SHGs are successful if there is [a] change in attitude ... creating internal initiation in the mothers is the success, not the actual involvement in business. (IP respondent)

The extent to which either the aim or the anticipated outcome of the SHG programme has been achieved is discussed below.

Process

In brief, the overall process envisaged for the SHGs is that the 25 mothers get together to save on a regular basis – while ensuring their child attends Speed School – prepare a business plan, and when

they've matured sufficiently – i.e. they have done some saving and been given some training – they are given the seed money in one or more disbursements, to invest collectively and to generate further income for internal lending, further investment and sufficient profit for individuals to use to continue to support their child's education.

The thinking on the best way to implement the programme differed among respondents, and its practice has also altered over the years, particularly as regards the timing of the seed money deposit and the number of disbursements. Respondents' diverse views and the varying practices among the SHGs are discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

Current status of the focus SHGs

As Table 4.1 illustrates, of the four focus SHGs from previous years, only the 2013/2014 group in Teff was still active, according to SHG participants, although some individual members from other groups were confirmed to still be trading. However, these were not necessarily businesses set up through the GGE SHGs, as some women were already trading before their involvement in the programme. Table 4.1 also provides information on other cohorts within the case-study sites, where information was provided by SHG members.

Table 4.1 Selected information on SHGs

Site and year	Speed School year	Savings amount**	Seed money accessed¹⁸ (no of instalments & when, amount)	Investment (individual or collective?)	Current status (groups functioning or individual success)¹⁹
ARISHI 1styr*	2013/2014	2 ETB/week	Two instalments 1 st instalment ETB 180 to individuals in October 2015 (after ETB 20/person was deducted to cover the transport expenses for officials) 2 nd instalment had not been accessed as of April 2016, (deposited by IP in 2014)	Some members made individual investments; most spent the money on household expenses, including children's education	Groups not functioning Some individual success
ARISHI 2ndyr	2014/2015	2 ETB/week	Two instalments 1 st instalment not accessed by the groups/individuals until March, 2016, when 140 Birr was given per person (1 st instalment deposited by IP in Feb 2015; 2 nd in Sep, 2016)	n/a	Groups stopped saving after the Speed School year.
ARISHI 3rdyr	2015/2016*	ETB 10/week until Feb/March, then reduced to ETB 5/week.	Two instalments 1 st instalment not accessed as of March, 2016 (1 st instalment deposited by IP in March, 2016)	n/a	Groups are still saving
HANJA 1styr*	2011/2012*	ETB 2.50/week	One instalment SHGs not given seed money; IP used the money to buy maize as an investment for the group. Individuals got ETB 290 or	Collective – in the maize. No members invested from the sale of the maize; most spent the money on household expenses,	Groups not functioning No individual success

¹⁸ "Not been accessed" means that according to SHG members, they had not been able to gain access to the seed money from the MFI, even when the money had been deposited by the IP.

¹⁹ "Some individual success" means that some women are still managing to trade successfully on an individual basis.

			400 (accounts varied) from sale of the maize around October 2012	including children's education.	
HANJA 2ndyr	2012/2013	Not Known	1 st instalment (ETB 10,000) deposited by IP in July, 2013, 2 nd in Aug, 2013.	Individual	Groups not functioning. Some individual success
HETTO 1styr*	2011/2012*	ETB 2.50/week	One instalment SHGs not given seed money; IP used the money to buy maize as an investment for the group. Individuals got ETB 400 from sale of the maize around October 2013	Collective – in the maize. Some members invested individually from the money from the sale of the maize	Groups not functioning. Some individual success
HE 2ndyr	2012/2013	Not known	Not known	Individual & small group	Some individual and small group success
TE 1styr*	2013/2014	ETB 5 fortnightly	One instalment of ETB 10,500 in Dec 2013	Collective	Focus SHG still functioning but struggling with investment. Some small group success
TE 2ndyr*	2014/2015	ETB 10/month	One instalment of ETB 10,500 in Dec 2014 (IP report indicates ETB 11,100 deposited)	Collective	Focus SHG still functioning. Collective success
TE 3rdyr	2015/2016	5 ETB fortnightly	One instalment of ETB 11,500 in May 2016	Collective	Groups still saving

* Focus SHG years

** Only known for focus SHGs

Details of the information presented in Table 4.1 are given later in the chapter. The various stages of the SHG set-up and operation are discussed in broadly chronological order.

Selection of Speed School children and SHG members

The selection of SHG members was said to be dependent on the selection of the Speed School students. In all four schools all respondents confirmed that the **children were selected first**. Respondents were aware that children had to be very poor, including orphans, 9–14 years of age (though there was a lack of clarity on this issue in Teff), and dropouts, or young people who had never previously been to school, though this last criterion was only mentioned in two of the sites.

It was agreed that children were **first identified at village/gott level, and names were then forwarded to the kebele**, where the Community Management Committee decided. The principals in Teff and Hetto mentioned being involved in the process, as were church elders. From the second year in Arishi facilitators were instrumental in the selection.

However, it was not clear how the final selection was made if there were more children than spaces available. In Teff, where, according to one community respondent, a hundred children's names were put forward one year, only 75 could be chosen for three classes; the 25 children who were not included were given writing materials by the Link School and encouraged to enrol there.

In all four case-study sites, and more broadly across the woredas, **serious concerns were raised about the transparency and fairness of the selection process**. Cases of nepotism were reported, on the part of kebele officials in particular, and woreda officials and IP respondents, in Shebedino and Loka Abaya especially, though this was an area of the programme that could be improved:

Sometimes it is not fair that the kebele officials' family were selected in the programme. (woreda official)

There are problems in the selection ... sometimes it is not the poorest of the poor that are selected. (woreda official)

For example, two of the committee members from one group mentioned that they had each put two children through Speed School class and the third had tried to enrol her second child, who was refused entry on account of being underage. It is possible that the children were orphaned within a polygamous marriage – which would allow for a second child from the same household to attend Speed School – but it is highly unlikely to have been the case with all three women (See Section 4.1 for more on this.).

Underage children was another concern. Even given that ages are often not known or are approximate – in one case a boy gave two different ages in two different interviews, and in another case the mother and child did not agree on the Speed School graduate's age – it was clear from observations, and confirmed in respondent interviews, that some Speed School graduates were below the required age of nine. (See Table 5.1). The result of an underage child making it into Speed School – beyond their taking the place of a more deserving student – meant that they were even younger than their peers once they transitioned into Grade 4 at the Link School, e.g. one young student in Arishi who was only seven when he was in Speed School is now in Grade 5 at the age of nine.

A further problem was that of **children who were already enrolled in the Link School transferring into the Speed School**. This was also reported in all four sites. Of the 18 focus Speed School graduates across the sample, half had transferred directly from school (see Table 5.1). In Arishi, in particular, this had caused a certain amount of friction, between the programme, the school and the kebele. As one government official put it in an informal conversation: *"They [Speed Schools] are stealing our children."* The transfer from government school to Speed School was said to be due to an assumption among parents that NGO involvement would entail better quality schooling and financial benefit for the mothers that would extend beyond the initial year. Yet, as several other respondents indicated here, and in the other schools, it was also because parents had already seen how well Speed School graduates were doing in the Link School:

...having seen ALFA graduates' performance, many parents want to transfer their children to ALFA programme. (SHG member, Arishi)

I purposely dropped out for one year because my father heard that ALFA programme will be started in our kebele ... He has information about the programme. (male student, Arishi)

Indeed, Speed School has been so successful, with their graduates often doing markedly better in the Link School than other students in all four sites and more generally across the woredas, that it has become **a far more desirable alternative to sending a child to the state school**.

In a move to address such issues, the facilitators in Arishi, rather than the kebele officials, started to undertake the selection. They said they went from village to village to enrol children, seeking out orphans and poor children *"who cannot afford to pay for an exercise book"* – both those who had not been to school before and those that had dropped out and were within the required age range (9–14). The SHG group said that those who brought their children first got onto the programme. The list of potential students was then submitted to the school to ensure that none were already enrolled in the Link School (see Section 4.1), and to the kebele to check that they were indeed poor. However, their intervention seemed to have caused some resentment.

Several of these issues were raised at the recent GGE review meeting of IPs, and are recognised as a serious challenge. As one GGE respondent explained:

Woredas have sometimes complained that Speed Schools are snatching children from the primary schools, especially when the mothers hear that the students can complete the three years in the one year. Most mothers are even tempted to take out their children from the primary school to bring to the Speed School.

The **suggested solutions** by IPs and GGE senior management include strengthening the participation of the Link School principal on the selection committee, who can check that Speed School students are not already on the register for the Link School, working more closely with the WEO, and delaying the formation of Speed School classes until after primary schools have completed their registration, though this would mean completing the Speed School course in July, rather than June. However, this may not address all cases: the mother in Teff whose second child was refused access to Speed School on account of being underage decided to withhold him from going to the Link School, so that he could attend Speed School the following year.

Another contentious issue concerning SHG membership is **the requirement to commit to regular saving**; this, as several respondents pointed out, **often excludes the very poorest** women. As one GGE respondent explained:

Destitute mothers are not in a position to save. They can scarcely satisfy day-to-day needs. They need direct support.

However, whatever the shortcomings of the selection process, there was a feeling among some of the ordinary members who clearly were very vulnerable, and therefore rightly selected, that GGE, as opposed to some other NGOs, really cared about the very poor, a point backed up by one woreda women's affairs official:

Geneva Global SHGs, unlike others, are composed of poor families... mothers who are alone or sick.

One GGE respondent maintained that while there were issues with some of those selected, 90% were worthy participants.

Selection of committee members

In all six focus SHGs, **committee members were nominated by members and elected by a show of hands**, overseen by the facilitator in all cases, and also by the CM in three sites (Arishi, Hanja and Teff). The majority of the committee members were of a higher socio-economic status (except in Hanja) than the other ordinary members of the groups. According to Biscaye *et al.*'s (2012) review of SHGs in SSA and South Asia, this is common when leaders are elected by group members, and their leadership of the group is a way of maintaining their status. This issue was also raised by the IPs at their meeting, and as one of the GGE respondents pointed out, may impede groups' effective functioning. Indeed, as described later, there was conflict in some groups between committee and ordinary group members.

Table 4.2 Characteristics of SHG respondents in individual interviews

	Level of education	SHG still operating	SHG project	Children No. & gender	Children's schooling Level	Main income sources	Other saving/MF schemes
ARISHI SHG1**	G 9	No	n/a	M – 17 F – 12* F – 7	G 6 DO G 5 G 1	Sells foodstuffs from her home.	<i>Equb</i> CARE's "village saving" SHG for soap production
ARISHI SHG2	G 2	No	n/a	F – 14 M – 12* M – 7	G 6 G 5 G 1	Reinvested savings in a hen, and now sells different types of grain	<i>Equb</i> – ETB 20/week No others – can't afford them
HANJA SHG1**	Not been to school	No	No	F – 28 F – 28 F – 22 M – 20 M – 18	G 8 (finished) G 8 (finished) Vocational G 8 University	Depends on subsistence farming	Church-based SHG ETB 2 to 10/month

				M-17 F - 13* F -12	G 8 G 7 G 5		depending on the season (more in coffee harvesting). Currently 5 Birr.
HANJA SHG2**	G 3	No	No	F - 17 M - 13 M - 12*	University G 10 G 7*	Runs small shop & grows <i>khat</i> and coffee in small plot of land	Church-based SHG Saving varies from ETB 2 to 10/week depending on the season (more in coffee harvesting)
HETTO SHG1**	G 8	No	No	M -14 M -14* F - 8 F - 6	G 8 G 7* G 2 G 1	Individual business from seed money	Other government SHG Saves ETB 3 fortnightly
HETTO SHG2	Not been to school	No	No	M -25 M -23 M - 20 F - 19 F - 18 M - 16* F-15 M - 15	G 10 (finished) G 9 DO G 6 DO G 7 G 6 G-6* G-5 G-5	Individual business from seed money	Other government SHG Saves ETB 3 fortnightly
TEFF SHG1	Not been to school	Yes	Fattening oxen & cows	M- 14 M -13* M - 8 M - 6 F - 4 F - 2	G 6 G 5 Not known n/a n/a n/a	Sells <i>khat</i> but also depends on money from parents & relatives	None – can't afford them
TEFF SHG2	Not been to school	Yes	Fattening oxen & cows	F - 29 F - 18 M - 15 M -12*	G 5 DO to marry G 5 DO to marry G 4 DO G 5	Trades maize to help support subsistence farming	None – can't afford them

*Speed School child

** SHG committee member

SHG procedures

Each SHG agrees on its own rules and regulations beyond Geneva Global's own prerequisites, which according to the original *Geneva Global Speed School Quality Guide*²⁰ (p.43) are:

- Agreeing to save a fixed amount regularly;
- Agreeing to send their children to Speed School;
- Being willing to be trained;
- Being willing to attend adult literacy classes;

Interview data across the GGE senior staff members and IPs confirmed the first three. The women emphasised regular meetings, attendance at meetings, commitment to savings during the Speed School year and their child's attendance at Speed School. However, only groups in Teff mentioned adult literacy.

Regulations, where they existed, were similar across groups, following the core GGE rules but were open to amendment. In one woreda the IP used a template (shown to the research team) with spaces

²⁰ A revised one was completed in 2016

for the SHGs to fill in to record the group rules. All groups reported being overseen by the facilitator and/or CM while they agreed on their regulations.

Meetings were held at different intervals across the six core groups, from “*no serious meetings*” but informal weekly gatherings in the 2013/2014 group in Arishi, to weekly meetings in the later group and in the Hanja SHG, and monthly meetings in Hetto, though savings were collected fortnightly. In Teff, the 2013/14 group reported that they had struggled to meet monthly during the Speed School year because of disagreements among the membership but had managed four meetings in the three months prior to the interview. The 2015/2016 group, on the other hand, were happy to meet monthly:

A new bride is shy to go out but we are very happy when we meet. (SHG member).

One CM reckoned 10 out of 15 groups they were responsible for met regularly.

Attendance was formally recorded for four of the six groups and penalties were stipulated for non-attendance and sometimes for late coming, overseen by the facilitator. In Arishi, although the facilitator kept a record in the 2013/2014 group, there were no rules about attendance or saving and therefore no penalties. The ordinary member interviewed maintained that only the committee members actually met. The later SHG had more formal regulations, took attendance and were considering penalties for non-attendance and was already demanding 2 Birr for late comers. The Hetto group had not taken a register and had no formal regulations, but the committee said they followed up absentees. There were no penalties. The following year’s cohort, according to the facilitator, had kept attendance and had more formal rules. The women in Hanja maintained that attendance had been good – but no register was taken and a maximum of a 2-Birr fine may be imposed on an absentee. In Teff various interviewees acknowledged that absenteeism at meetings was an issue – which researcher observation also confirmed – with women often going to market to trade. At the only SHG meeting that was observed, only fifteen attended out of 25; however, the meeting had been specially convened, not on the usual day, and it seemed that not all members had been informed. The 2013/2014 group kept attendance, and fined 10-20 Birr fine for absence without good reason. Unacceptable reasons included household chores, trading or staying at home; acceptable reasons included mourning or illness. On the other hand, the 2015/2016 group, which also kept attendance and graded it A–C, appeared to be more tolerant of absenteeism. As one member pointed out: “*Where would they find the money for saving if they didn’t do trading?*” Poor attendance was penalised by insisting the member prepares coffee for the whole group.

It was generally the case that if the child dropped out of Speed School, the mother was excluded from the group. One IP respondent warned:

If the child drops out from the ALFA class the mother will also be sacked from the SHG. What is the point of having her there? It is also stated in the SHG regulations.

However, one CM said this was not the case in their groups, and a GGE respondent reported that the IP consensus was that it is not up to GGE, but up to the group to decide on the matter. In Teff, the women reported that once the child was in the Link School, child attendance at school was no longer mandatory though it was discussed at meetings. In the one meeting observed by a research team member, the facilitator brought up the issue, to which one mother responded:

Let the facilitators inform us whose child is absent frequently and we will discuss it with the 1-5 grouping and advise her so she will send her child to school. You can send a message through our children.

Although several groups had penalties for non-appearance or late coming at meetings, it was not clear to what extent the rules were enforced and penalties exacted.

Irregular or non-appearance, or late coming at meetings may well relate to the fact that **attending meetings is time consuming, and may be taking up time needed to earn income**. Though the matter

was only brought up explicitly by the women from Teff, who miss meetings to go and trade *khat*, involvement in SHGs can add to the gendered burden of work many poor women already face within the household (Mayoux, 2005); moreover, as highlighted in Chapter 2, it may indirectly add to the workload of other children in the family, if mothers leave a young child for one of the other children (usually female) to care for (Woldehanna *et al.*, 2006; Odell, 2011; Haile *et al.*, 2012), or even involve the child in the business, possibly causing them to miss school, as Haile *et al.* (2012) found.

Training & support during the Speed School year

The original SHG manual envisaged a three-day capacity-building programme for SHG committee members twice a year for one or two years (p.51) and one-day capacity building programmes for all SHG members, for each group every four to six months. The revised manual also talks about a two-year training plan but the initial training is scheduled to take place in Weeks 16 and 17, several months after the groups have formed. However, **IP and SHG respondents reported a one-day woreda-level training, at most, for committee members and minimal, more ad-hoc support for SHG groups in general.**

Woreda-level training was said to happen once a year. SHG committee members in the six focus groups across the three woredas, however, **variously reported undergoing a day's training, a half-day training, or no training at all.** The fact that there was no training in the initial year for the two Shebedino groups, which was confirmed by the IP, may have been due to teething issues in the programme as it was the first year of operation. The one-day committee training in subsequent years in this woreda was confirmed by respondents. In the case of one group, the disagreement between the IP and the mothers as to whether the training had occurred might be due to a misunderstanding of what constitutes "training", since the only woreda training that was observed was more an information-sharing meeting. In any case, the women explained that they had received input for another SHG activity prior to their involvement with GGE, so knew what to do. The 2015/2016 committee members in one woreda were still awaiting news of training at the end of data-gathering in April.

Two of the IPs complained that the woreda-level training was not budgeted for and therefore expenses for facilitation and/or per diems for government officials who attended the training were supposed to be covered from IPs' surpluses from other budgets.

Interviewees generally agreed that the **woreda-level training is given at around the time the seed money is released**; however, since the release is sometimes delayed, so too is the training. One TO suggested that holding the training for committee members earlier would be better for two reasons: first, mothers would learn about the need to save and about other issues from the outset, and second, they would be aware of government involvement in the programme, and would therefore be more conscientious and responsible about the money. This resonates with findings from another study that suggested that beneficiaries sometimes feel less responsible towards external funding (Gobezie, 2010).

Woreda representatives at the training came from among the following departments: women's affairs, micro-finance and co-operatives, alongside IP involvement through the TO and CMs. The woreda school supervisor was also sometimes involved. Topics reportedly included: benefits and challenges of saving, children's education and management of finances. The one woreda-level training day observed by a research team member did not give detailed practical training; it was more a case of getting core messages across, such as the need to invest together and spend the profit to support their children's education, though some kebele-specific business opportunities were identified, and participants were urged to pass on the information to group members. There was also a pledge that government would support the SHGs. Though there was some opportunity for questions, few were asked and there were

no handouts or information leaflets to take away, but perhaps this was because literacy levels are assumed to be low.

Woreda officials' involvement in the training is said to be productive, according to TO and GGE respondents, as it enables them to familiarise themselves with the programme. Woreda respondents, in turn, confirmed its usefulness. IPs, however, pointed out the need to pay per diems for woreda officials to attend, which were not included in the budget, though this is reportedly set to change. More generally, one TO noted that if government officials are not paid per diems, they are generally less supportive.

For one group, the woreda-level training happened around October of the second year, once some of the seed money had been released by GGE (see previous section on *Training & support during the Speed School year*). However, they reported attending only a half-day briefing run by the IP on saving, without woreda or kebele participation, which they felt was not very useful. They claimed that they were not told how much the seed money was; nor were they advised what they were supposed to do with it:

We were not told what to plan with the money ... what to do with it in the future. (SHG committee member).

They did, however, report signing the documents and establishing an account at the woreda micro-finance institution.

Ongoing support varied across the six groups, but in general was inadequate and sporadic. In all six cases it was the facilitator, rather than the CM, who was mentioned by the SHG members as being the main link with the programme; the CM was involved in the initial election of officials, the woreda-level training, and gave an introductory briefing at the first full meeting, but thereafter was seemingly not involved. One CM candidly admitted that they did not attend SHG meetings because the many sites they were responsible for were dispersed across too great a geographical area; as a result they had delegated the responsibility to the facilitator. They did, however, telephone the facilitator regularly, which the facilitator confirmed, to see if there were any issues that needed sorting. The facilitator, according to the women, attended meetings once a month.

The large number of sites (usually 20) across wide geographical areas was an issue raised by IPs more generally at the GGE review meeting and was recognised by GGE as an issue to address. As one CM put it:

After riding a motorbike for so long to reach to some of the sites, my support and follow-up will not be effective.

The recent cost-cutting that has seen some CMs sharing motorbikes has reportedly compounded the issue. In one woreda, the CM pointed out that although they attended meetings (which the SHG members disputed), it was difficult because they often had to wait long hours for the women to turn up; besides, as they also said, meetings were liable to change at the last minute, resulting in a wasted journey. The fact that some SHGs held fairly irregular meetings, together with the lack of telephonic communication in two of the sites, is also likely to have worked against regular attendance by the CM. A couple of TOs said they were reluctant to press CMs to attend all SHG meetings since their expenses were not covered and there was insufficient transport.

In addition, the research team got the impression that the **CMs were more involved with the Speed Schools than the SHGs**, perhaps because that's where their relative expertise and experience lies. In fact, a couple of the CMs confirmed that although their initial training by GGE had been good, the focus had been more on the Speed Schools than on SHGs.

One CM reported that the initial four-day training he had received had been very useful but that he was now in his third year and had only received one refresher day at the beginning of 2015/16, but felt that more training was needed. One GGE respondent said that CMs and facilitators were supposed to receive refresher training by the TO every quarter, which was clearly not happening. Besides, as they also pointed out, the TO and the CM often have the same level of qualification.

GGE is aware that previously the training for the CMs has been inadequate in this respect:

We give a sort of brainstorming training for community mobilisers. Definitely I don't believe this makes the community mobiliser knowledgeable about self-help groups. So, under such circumstances the community mobiliser cannot do that much. (GGE respondent)

To address the issue, GGE piloted training in 2015/2016 through an external provider that specialises in business-skills training; it was trialled with the TOs, some GGE staff and a selection of CMs from the IPs were invited, with a view to rolling it out across the programme next year.

However, the evidence from this study raises questions about whom the SHG training should target, given that in all four sites the facilitators seemed to be carrying out this particular CM function. Although one senior staff member confirmed that they were aware that “sometimes” the facilitator was doing the CM’s job, they emphasised that this should not be the case.

He [the CM]’s also responsible for organising the mothers – from the first day up to the end it is the responsibility of the community mobiliser to train the mothers, to convince and establish until they have a link with a microfinance institution. Even at the end he is the one to follow up. (GGE respondent)

SHGs and facilitators confirmed that **facilitators often attended meetings**, sometimes to give advice and discuss savings but also to collect the money the mothers had saved. As was explained in Hanja, since the women met in the same church room where the children were having Speed School class, it made sense for the facilitator to attend. However, sometimes the women themselves met alone, with no support.

The Speed School manual specifies that during the first few months the groups should receive “weekly visits by the supervisor” and undertake “self-development activities”. Although one GGE senior staff member confirmed that the CM should be visiting sites weekly, visiting 4–5 sites a day, another thought that it was more realistic to expect CM’s to visit sites every ten days. One of the TOs thought every two weeks was more likely. CMs were expected to discuss between 16 and 20–24 (numbers varied depending on the respondent) issues every two weeks with every SHG.

However, **in none of the six focus groups – nor seemingly in other cohorts for the same schools – were “weekly visits by the supervisor” taking place**; nor was there any mention of organised training/discussions given by either the CM or facilitator. One group mentioned that they would like to have seen more of the CM to help them settle internal disputes while some groups, in Loka Abaya and Shebedino, felt “abandoned” or “mistreated” by the IP. This feeling is likely to have been exacerbated because the IP only has a mandate to look after the SHGs for the Speed School year – a fact which may not have been communicated to the SHGs.

4.3. Savings, investments and profits

RQ 2 In what ways and to what extent are SHGs helping to generate income for mothers?

The extent to which groups and individuals managed to generate money through savings and seed money investments varied tremendously across the four sites and even within year cohorts, as GGE, IPs and SHGs learned from previous experiences and made adjustments. Outcomes also differed among individuals within the SHG, where individual rather than collective savings and investments were made. Groups that failed to invest, or had failed investments, for reasons detailed elsewhere in this chapter, generally divided up the seed money that remained and spent it on basic necessities, including school materials for their child(ren), until it ran out. At the other end of the spectrum, there were some accounts of successful businesses, generally individual or small-group initiatives, that were

beginning to grow. Businesses generally involved trading in maize, flour, teff, coffee, enset or vegetables, as well as selling other small household food-related goods. Some women, including the focus SHGs were involved in animal rearing and fattening projects, for example of oxen, sheep, or goats. Although, as highlighted above (see section on *SHG procedures*), some of these businesses might generate more work for other children in the family.

Successful collective investments in a trading community

In Teff, where there is a strong tradition of female trading, collective business initiatives were more successful, though fortunes also differed among groups. Take, for example, the two focus SHGs. On the one hand was the success story of the 2014/2015 group, which had saved 800 Birr by the time of the interview in March 2016, and had spent the group's seed money on buying 23 lambs (one for each of the remaining group members – two having dropped out). The facilitator went with them to help make the purchase. As one SHG member explained:

Because we are women, the sellers don't think we will buy or can buy so the facilitator helped by buying the lambs.

They then split into smaller groups and took the lambs with them. Each group has a leader, who supervises the care of the lambs. They now have 42 lambs but have sold two, using the money to buy stationery for their children, for which they are grateful:

The women in our community struggle to buy exercise books in September when class starts, but now they say you have saved us from the nagging of the children asking for exercise books. Let Allah bless you. (SHG member)

In contrast, the 2013/2014 group had problems from the outset. They initially lost six group members because of a lack of communication; they had thought the savings were for individual investment but when they discovered that the project was collective – which they found out when the committee reported back after the woreda training day – they dropped out, though their request to withdraw their 20–40 Birr of individual savings was refused. When the seed money was released two weeks after the committee training day, the group spent it on buying four oxen, which they intended to fatten over two years and sell at market. However, no proper feed was available at the time, on account of the drought, so they had to pay high fees for fodder. Worse still, the oxen got sick and they had to pay veterinary expenses. Thus, after the first year they had only made 900 Birr from the venture. They sold three oxen after the second year but did not make a profit overall. One ox remains. In the group interview in November, the committee said that they were changing direction and intended to buy *teff* in bulk and sell it retail, though by the time of the individual interviews with ordinary members in March, they had bought three small cows to fatten instead. This would seem to have been a decision solely made by the committee: "We three talked and bought the cattle."

Results of collective investment were generally unfavourable within the six focus SHG groups, as shown in Table 4.1: in Teff, the community with a history of trading, the 2014/2015 group that had invested in lambs was still thriving as a group and can be counted as the most successful SHG within the sample; the 2013/2014 group was still in existence but struggling – having lost members and money and failed with oxen they were about to change direction and invest the little that remained in buying *teff* in bulk, and selling it retail. The two Shebedino groups from Hanja and Hetto that started in 2011/2012, which were part of a disastrous maize experiment (see Box 4.2), were no longer functioning, though a few individuals in Hetto were still said to be trading. In Arishi the 2013/2014 group had collapsed on account of the non-release of the seed money by the MFI and the current 2015/2016 group was still saving for the sake of having their children in school but were not counting on any seed money to invest, and the lack of support they were receiving does not bode well for the future.

Although some GGE, IP and woreda staff gave examples of successful businesses (generally individual or small-group enterprises), other respondents suggested that many SHGs fail often because of the lack of support and follow-up. Generally, **robust evidence is needed as to the proportion of businesses that have been sustained after the initial injection of cash/seed money, as they are currently not tracked.** At the moment the M&E of the groups is sketchy, but a more reliable monitoring would require further investment. As one GGE respondent acknowledged:

A lot of improvement is needed. ... The data doesn't sometimes reflect the actual reality. I mean we go down there and see some SHGs reported to have started a business, but when you go down there, there might be lots lagging behind. We need to invest a lot for it to work right. Otherwise, it seems to be the weak link of this strong programme.

Collective investment in maize: a tale of two SHGs ...

One tale from the first cohort of SHGs in 2011/2012 in Shebedino illustrates the need for SHGs to have full ownership of the business, rather than having one imposed on them, however well intentioned. The case also illustrates the need for continuous support during the Speed School year as well as follow-up afterwards.

After the SHGs had been saving for ten months, the seed money was released and was immediately invested in purchasing maize; the plan was to resell it the following season when prices were higher. The decision was made by the IP for all SHGs in the woreda, though as the IP confirmed, not all were in agreement, including the focus SHGs in both Hanja and Hetto. As one committee member in Hetto explained:

We didn't know why the IP wanted and decided to invest it [seed money] in maize and why they preferred to buy it in that way ... We were interested in investing it in coffee. (SHG member)

Each SHG secretary plus an additional member joined IP personnel when the maize was bought in Hawassa, but they reported having no say in the purchase. The Hanja SHG stored the maize in rooms in the church compound. They were told to apply pesticide to safeguard the maize, but failed to do it properly, so some was badly damaged by pests. What's more, two to three months later, when they were ready to sell, they weighed the grain, and according to the treasurer, found that it was 3-4 kilos short for each quintal. She speculated that the remainder had either been stolen while in storage, or that they had been short-changed by the merchant at the initial purchase. The result was that they made a net loss on the sale. Nevertheless, they split the proceeds (290 Birr each), which they added to the 100 Birr of individual savings; each member then opened a savings account in the woreda MFI. But they reported being given no further direction on what to do next, so stopped saving and withdrew all the money apart from their initial savings to use on household expenses, including their child(ren)'s education.

They [IP] ... departed, abandoned us in the middle of nowhere ... they did not show us direction how to be involved in business. (SHG member)

We were given no proper guidance and ... we withdrew the amount, 290, and spent it on children's exercise books and clothing ... as we have children other than those who attended Speed School. No money was left for trading. (SHG member)

Some members also spent it [the money] on house expenditure... For instance, there were some who had already taken flour from sellers on credit and they paid it back as they withdrew the money. (SHG member)

Had the seed money not been spent on the maize business, each member would have had 380 Birr plus 100 Birr of their personal savings, totalling 480 Birr.

In contrast, the Hetto group's maize survived intact and individual shares of the sale amounted to 400 Birr each, to add to their 100 Birr savings. However, like the Hanja group they reported a lack of guidance on what to do next. Despite this, some individuals reportedly succeeded in continuing to save and even started a business, whereas others, as in Hanja, spent the money.

I invested all the seed money. I am trading some items like kerosene, soap, coffee. I get some profit I use for myself and I also save. (SHG member, Hetto, with prior trading experience)

The IP agreed that this initial experiment – which a GGE senior staff member affirmed was a one-off occurrence – had not worked, but justified the approach by explaining that it had been aimed at avoiding the pitfalls of previous SHG initiatives:

In the woreda, the community is used to receiving money from other NGOs with a short training on business ... but it is known that the mothers do not use the money; rather their husbands take and spend it on alcohol drinks... our project approach is different. ... We did not want this to happen so we decided not to give the seed money to the mothers, so we arranged the maize business...but in the end we realized that it was not effective for they were not willing to do business and make savings in groups ... and for the next batch [of SHGs], we changed the approach.

The change of direction for the following batches, which consisted in saving in smaller govt-level groups was confirmed by the focus SHG respondents and both SHG and IP respondents reported the existence of some more successful individual and small-group businesses in the woreda from later cohorts.

Savings

All focus SHGs managed to save to a greater or lesser extent, either collectively or individually; the opportunity to save and prove to themselves that they could save and be involved in business was appreciated by some mothers, especially by those for whom the experience was new, even when the enterprise ultimately failed.

Even though we didn't save much, I am happy because the money I took then is still here and I am working with it. (SHG member, Arishi)

Although they [the programme] left while we are in the middle of nowhere, it helped us to develop the habit of saving ... and still we are in the system saving and involved in small trades too. (SHG member, Hetto)

The benefit I get from the programme is I learn to manage and save money. (SHG member, Hetto)

In the groups that met regularly the money was handed over to the treasurer at meetings, who, in the cases of Hanja, Hetto and Teff, deposited the money with the micro-finance agent. In Arishi, where there was no kebele-level agent, the facilitator collected the savings to deposit. Where there were no regular meetings, or women who did not attend regularly, money was given to the treasurer as and when they saw them, for example in the market. However, this could lead to disputes. In the one meeting observed in Teff it there was a fierce argument between one ordinary member and the treasurer; the former maintained that she had handed over her savings earlier in the week:

...Try to remember when I came to pay; you told me that you did not have the collection sheet but you took the money.

In Arishi at one stage, mothers were sending savings money with their child to give to the facilitator, to then pass on to the treasurer; however, in some cases not all the money reached its destination. The IP has since stipulated that mothers have to attend meetings and personally hand over the savings directly to the treasurer.

Since the groups had received no training in book-keeping, it was no surprise that the accounts that were seen of the two current SHGs were rather randomly laid out in a couple of exercise books. Indeed, the treasurer of the focus SHG in Hetto was, by her own admission, unable to read or write. Some groups had individual savings books; others had group savings books, kept by the treasurer. However, in two sites where they had group savings books, ordinary members complained that they had not seen the accounts and were clearly concerned about what was happening to the money.

Collective or individual investments?

The issue of collective rather than individual investments was contentious for the SHG members. GGE encourages large group investments (25) and the government emphasis in their own SHG programme is also on group enterprises, though of varying sizes.

We're encouraging the group mentality and the investment is safer in a group. Both are important. Both groups and individuals are doing well. (GGE respondent)

We do not urge or pressure them [SHGs]. We try to instil the business idea and the benefit of collective investment ... as a concept ... not as a principle to be followed by them... simply showing the power of money if collectively invested. But it is up to them to decide. (IP respondent)

Most SHG members across all four sites, however, wanted individual investments, although as one facilitator pointed out, the seed money when divided by 25 is too small an amount to use as start-up for a business. According to one microfinance officer in Shebedino, the desire for work individually is common to all SHGs programmes, whether organised by NGOs or government; the mothers are “*not willing or effective in group business.*” Unless the GGE training sessions can address group members’ preference for individual investment, groups may become dysfunctional (Gebreselassie *et al.*, 2012).

One of the arguments against the Geneva Global SHG membership of 25 is the fact that **women come from different villages some distance apart, and therefore do not know or necessarily trust each other**. Smaller, village-level groupings were therefore generally preferred.

Having got experience from the first SHG cohorts [the failed maize experiment – see box, p.000], we organized the 2012/13 and others in small groups [village level 1–5 groupings]. Collective investments are not successful, especially in the Geneva Global context ... as they live in different villages. (IP respondent)

Village-level grouping is more convenient for they can meet at coffee and settle their differences. (IP respondent)

If these mothers are not from the same village and if they don't know each other and don't trust each other ... it affects the group, the process and everything. (GGE respondent).

Also they themselves should develop trust among themselves, which is difficult to achieve within this period [one year] ... Although the CM gives support, they cannot meet them regularly because of the large number of Speed School classes and SHGs. (TO)

Trust and transparency in group investments was clearly an issue among the women, primarily between committee members and ordinary members. In Arishi, the non-release of the seed money by the micro-finance agent for the 2013/2014 group led to the ordinary members accusing the committee of using the money for themselves and reporting them to the kebele chair.

Even in the more successful group enterprises in Teff, trust is an issue. For example, the decision by the 2013/2014 SHG committee to change direction and buy cattle was made by the committee alone, without consulting the ordinary members. One ordinary member in this group complained that she had no idea how much she had saved, because all accounts are kept in the group saving book; nor did she have much say as to what would be done with the profits from selling the oxen:

We [ordinary members] don't know what is happening ... for example, with the oxen we have for the group. Had it been individual, we would easily know our profits and spent it on exercise books and other things for our children.

The committee members admitted that some of the ordinary members distrust them, because they think the committee is abusing the funds. For example, the office bearers present expenses for taking care of the oxen, which some of the ordinary members question. The planned skewed sharing of the proceeds from selling the oxen – giving half to the committee to cover their extra costs for looking after the beasts – is unlikely to improve relations of trust between committee and ordinary members. While affirming their own integrity, the committee admits that some office bearers in other groups are “irresponsible”.

A lack of clarity and budget for certain SHG-related expenses could also cause further antagonism between the committee and the other members. Expenses for attending the woreda-level training or

travelling to the woreda town for the formal withdrawal of funds was said to be an annual point of contention between the women and the IP. One GGE respondent was adamant that it was the IP's responsibility to pay for the committee members to attend the training, while simultaneously admitting that there was no budget for it, and that money would have to be taken from IP's surpluses from other budgets, such as for fuel. In the one 2015/2016 woreda training that was observed, the SHG committee members argued for taking their expenses from the group's seed money, which the IP refused. According to the women, travel from the furthest kebeles cost over 100 Birr per member; the 300 Birr in total therefore amounted to more than the total they had saved, which seems somewhat perverse. The women were also aware that drawing on group savings to cover the committee's expenses would not go down well with some of the other group members, who were already questioning some of the committee's expenditure.

This divide between office bearers and ordinary members may well be due in part to the fact that the office bearers are often not of the same socio-economic status. As various respondents noted, and other studies have confirmed (e.g. Odell, 2011), **the group members should be of similar socio-economic status for the group to work well.**

Some are better off in their living and do not want to do small business, like me, while others are so poor that they want to spend the money to cover their immediate living expenses and some don't have the strength to work together. It negatively affects investing together in business. ... In our group, [2011/2012] this is one of the reasons why we did not start investment after we withdrew the seed money from our individual account in OMO microfinance. (SHG committee member)

Intra-group heterogeneity in other respects was also highlighted as having an impact on group dynamics:

The success [of the group] depends on the members' strength; some are hard-working and others not. The leaders' initiative and commitment are also seen as critical to group investment success. (IP respondent)

The grouping is not good ... some have the ability to work others do not... this leads to failure for they were not willing to work in such groups. (kebele respondent)

The Geneva Global SHG is different from others in that it is the children who are selected first and the mothers are then called to be in groups ... some are [too] old or even sick to do any type of income-generating activity ... and also the 25 members could live in different villages which is far even to meet, let alone to invest and do business together. (IP respondent)

Although the research evidence and the literature suggest the need for intra-group homogeneity for the SHG to function well, as one IP respondent pointed out, this is impossible because the children are selected first, not the mothers.

Seed money

The release of the seed money (US\$500) both in terms of timing and the number of disbursements, was another point of contention and debate, which also had a bearing on the ability of the various SHGs to generate income. GGE has experimented with different disbursement patterns for the seed money over the years of operation, from one lump sum at the end of the Speed School year, to two or more disbursements, with the first being given around March or April, once the women have saved, undergone some training and produced a business plan, and the second being released once the children have transferred to the Link School, the following October. The second tranche of money, according to some IP and GGE respondents, was dependent on the effective functioning of the group, though not all the women seem to have been aware of this condition.

The notion of a business plan is mentioned in the SHG manual and was talked about by IP and GGE staff, but in the case-study focus groups at least, there was no mention of a formal written plan, but rather a business idea that needed approval.

At the IP review meeting, IPs were said to be divided over seed money timing, with half preferring groups to save and start their own business without relying on external funding, but maintaining the promise of seed money as an incentive. The other half apparently prefer seed money to be given out nearer the beginning, around October, once the SHGs have formed and come up with a feasible business plan. One TO maintained that GGE preferred to give money later whereas virtually all groups in their woreda would prefer the money to be given at harvesting time (Nov–Jan), when prices are lower, enabling them to sell later, when prices are high.

Support to SHGs is better if money is given at the right time, for example, during harvesting season so as to buy it when it is cheap and sell in summer when the price gets high. (SHG member, Teff)

One GGE respondent also expressed preference for an early release of the seed money, explaining:

Because we need to trust these mothers, because educating their children is their responsibility. It's not our responsibility. Even if we delay that money to the next year, if they are not willing to educate their children they will take them out.

However, as another GGE respondent pointed out, whether or not you give a one-off payment and when you give it should depend on your aim in giving the money (be it economic empowerment for the mother or ensuring the child stays in school) and on other circumstances, such as the amount of savings the women have, and on the level of support provided. There was also a call for flexible timing and consultations with the women, though the feeling among a number of GGE and IP respondents, however, was that the mothers should be encouraged to save before being given money so as to discourage dependency:

The seed money shouldn't substitute their own effort. Whatever we provide should not create dependency. (GGE respondent)

A related issue that could be detrimental to the success of the SHGs was the **apparent lack of communication** in some cases **between the IP and the SHGs**, about exactly how much money the mothers would get and when it would be given (even given the vagaries of the eventual release of funds by the MFI). The 2015/2016 SHG in Arishi maintained they had no knowledge of whether they would be given any seed money, and if so how much, and maintained that the issue had not been mentioned by either the facilitators or the CM. Another SHG committee in Shebedino, interviewed during the research scoping visit, reported that they had saved hard initially, in the belief that once they had saved a certain amount, the seed money would be released. They were keen to catch the cheap grain prices in November, only to be told later by the facilitator, allegedly, that the money would not be released until the end of the Speed School year because otherwise they might stop sending their children to school.

Delays with the micro-finance institution constituted another major challenge to the success of the SHGs. Both GGE and IP respondents admitted that there were sometimes delays of one to three months before the MFI grants the SHG access to the account, often because the MFI wants to earn interest on the money deposited in the account.

They don't release the money fast because they want to earn interest (GGE respondent)

We transfer the seed money timely, rather it is the microfinance that delayed to give the seed money to the SHGs ... When the problem persists, if the group's effort to get their money fails, we get involved but still we prefer to solve it through negotiation but sometimes there might not be a prompt response despite our efforts. (IP respondent)

The problems was said to be more acute in the more rural kebeles, further from the woreda town. This was the case in the case-study site in Arishi, where the 2013/2014 group were forced to wait until October 2015 – two years after they originally formed – before they could access either the seed money or their own savings. The delay had a negative effect on the group as they gave up saving and, according to a KETB member, the incident affected the morale of other subsequent groups:

The situation affects their morale and incentive for saving ... it also creates a bad impression about the programme. (KETB respondent)

One of the SHG groups thought that greater involvement with the kebele cabinet, as other NGOs have done would help get the money released on time:

Women in other savings and NGOs get loans in time or early and started to expand their business ... and even they have paid off the first loan and are ready for the second round of loans. (SHG committee member)

Related to the timing and manner of the seed money disbursements, was the issue of **payment in cash or payment in kind**. GGE and IP staff maintained that from their experience both could work but it depended on the level of support, and the interests of the women. The disaster with the maize purchase in Shebedino (see box, p.57) underlines the importance of involving the women from the outset in the discussions to enable them to claim ownership of the project.

Thus, the different views about when to release the seed money were underpinned by different assumptions about the mothers: for example, the decision *not* to give money at the outset is justified either by a lack of trust in the mothers – thinking that they will not save if the money is given to them; nor will they keep their child in Speed School – and/or concern about the mothers lacking the necessary skills to invest the money wisely at that stage without training. The late release of the seed money is therefore often held as a carrot to ensure the mothers will keep their child in Speed School. This assumption was at its most apparent during the research scoping visit when in one Speed School class that was observed in June, all the SHG mothers had had their individual savings books temporarily confiscated until their child had sat the placement test for their entry into the Link School.

One of the ways the SHGs were supposed to help generate income for the mothers was through internal lending. Though this came up in one or two interviews with GGE or IP respondents, the matter was never raised in any of the SHG interviews, which suggests that it was not happening in the focus SHGs.

Other micro-finance/savings schemes

In all areas, to differing extents, but especially in Teff and Arishi, the women, and **the better off committee members in particular, were involved in other microfinance and/or savings schemes** run by government, the church or by other NGOs. In Teff, for example, in addition to the 5–10 Birr/month saved for the Geneva Global SHG, the committee members were involved in a micro-credit scheme (*ayire*) that involved saving 5 Birr/month and another scheme, *leyilitilkidir*, which involved being given a shared plot of land. In such circumstances one affiliation could help support another. For example, one SHG committee reported that they were able to manage their SHG even though they had not received training from GGE because of the training they had undergone for another SHG scheme. Similarly, the micro-credit scheme had enabled them to buy donkeys to transport goods to market and some of the profit they had invested in the traditional rotational savings association of *equb*, where they were apparently saving 20 Birr/week. In contrast, the two ordinary members of the same group, when asked about other schemes (see Table 4.2), said they were too poor to save.

The fact that some women – usually the more successful ones – had multiple affiliations, however, makes it hard to gauge the extent to which the GGE SHG success stories are due to the GG SHG model, or whether they are more due to funds, support and/or training from elsewhere and/or previous experience. Given the lack of training and support reported by most SHGs, the last two cases seem more likely explanations.

Follow-up support & sustainability

As highlighted in Section 4.2, Training & support during the Speed School year, there was inadequate IP support for the SHGs during the Speed School year, though facilitators tended to meet groups and

ensure the mothers were saving and that the child was still attending Speed School regularly. The situation was then compounded by a lack of follow-up support, which was widely recognised among respondents as being one of the major reasons many SHGs fail:

... We (the IP) follow up SHGs for one year – that is our formal agreement with Geneva Global – and this is not enough to properly train and support SHGs ... to the extent of making them ready for collective investment ... (GGE respondent)

A mother forbids her kid from sucking her milk only after she is sure that he is capable to survive without it ... The programme [the support given to us] should be like that but what has happened was the reverse. (SHG member)

At first it was good, they [the mothers] saved ... but later they no longer worked together ... I think it is due to a lack of support... awareness and proper training ... and the follow-up and support stopped before they are strong enough to stand by themselves. (school principal)

[The SHGs] need intensive follow-up; there was follow-up considering the staffing [capacity] at IP level, but they [the SHGs] need intensive and regular support and training ... if the [IP] staff don't have the necessary training and capacity... If there is well trained staff, clear direction and intensive support to the savings groups that would be good. (GGE respondent)

A few IP and GGE respondents cited examples of other successful SHG programmes that implement at least one follow-up year and a planned phase-out. Indeed, a couple of respondents stressed that providing high-quality, intensive support and follow-up was more important than providing money to the groups (see also Florescu, 2009); they pointed to other projects they had been involved in where with good training and support over a long period of time the women are then capable of generating income themselves. However, lack of good quality, relevant, needs-based training and follow-up is a problem common to many other SHG programmes (see Florescu, 2009; Gebreselassie *et al.*, 2012; Biscaye *et al.*, 2014; Deko *et al.*, 2014). One GGE respondent suggested allocating 25–30% of the SHG seed money to training.

The importance of follow-up becomes even more acute when considering that the SHGs receive the seed money (whether deliberately or unintentionally) towards the end of the year or sometimes beyond; thus, **when the groups are arguably most in need of support to help them invest and manage the seed money, programme support has already officially terminated.**

Given the current lack of budget for follow-up, GGE senior staff suggest that the IP should be making links with government and encouraging them to take the SHGs under their wing after the first year, once IP support stops. The Woreda Women's and Children's Affairs office was highlighted as the government department that most often takes over the stewardship of SHGs with other NGO SHG programmes, usually with a signed MOU. Other offices such the Women's Microfinance Office and the Micro and Small-scale Enterprises Development Agency (MSEDA) were identified as other offices that help provide savings groups with links to MFIs and access to markets. However, at the time of the research GGE did not have formal agreements with government for SHG follow-up, though negotiations were reportedly being initiated in this regard.

Government follow-up support was evident to a certain extent in Silte, where the SHGs benefited from kebele-level support from both women's affairs and microfinance offices. Even so, further support from the IP was requested by SHG members. In the Sidama case-study sites there seemed to be no support, though one GGE respondent said that in some cases within the zone, government at woreda and/or kebele level was continuing to support the SHGs:

There are some areas with strong follow-up; others less so. (GGE respondent)

Woreda women's affairs are involved in some parts, but not fully. (GGE respondent)

However, as IP and GGE sources also pointed out, the quality and the extent of woreda and kebele-level support varies depending on government capacity at the kebele and/or woreda level.

In addition to better support, training and follow-up, other features of successful, and therefore sustainable SHGs identified by government, IP and GGE respondents, as well as SHG members, included: smaller group-level groups; business plans aligned to particular contexts; adequate start-up capital within the group; trained grassroots facilitators to support SHGs locally; specialist-trained CMs; greater involvement of all SHG members (not just the committee) in managing the group; greater kebele involvement, including a kebele MFI; disbursement of seed money at harvest time when prices are lower.

4.4. SHG members' attitudes to schooling

RQ3 What are SHGs members' attitudes towards schooling?

It is clear that **all the SHG interviewees**, as well as the other mothers of the Speed School graduate interviewees, **already had a positive attitude towards education**, given that they had other children/siblings who had been to school at some stage, even if they had dropped out. In addition, there was no indication in anything that any of the SHG respondents said that suggested that their attitude had ever been anything but positive towards education:

We advise and want our children to learn so as they won't be like us ... there is a lot we missed because we didn't have access to education. (SHG member, Hetto)

Had they [her three children who had dropped out of school] done what we [parents] wanted, they would have been attending school ... they dropped out simply by their own will ... they do not listen to our advice. (SHG member, Hetto)

We have already missed out time for education so teaching our children is how we avenge it. (SHG member, Teff)

We have a lot of kids in our community and the land is not enough so what we can leave them is education. (SHG member, Teff)

I will sacrifice whatever I have to educate my children ... what else do I have to give them? (SHG member Hanja)

I did not have the chance to learn after Grade 3 ... and I always wanted to see my children as an educated person. (SHG member, Hanja)

I am educating my child with anger and determination. I will sell my clothes and teach him if I have to. Because I didn't learn I stayed backward and I don't want this to happen to my child. (SHG member, Arishi)

Our children have found eyes and their minds are opened, so we are very happy. (SHG member, Arishi)

Further evidence lies in the fact that where the SHG collective investments failed and the groups collapsed, the small amount of money individual mothers received was reportedly spent on children's clothing and school materials, thereby meeting a key objective of setting up the SHGs. In Arishi, where the women had low or no expectations of deriving any financial benefit for the programme, some were unconcerned because they valued the educational benefits of the programme more highly.

The women from other years are discouraging us from saving, saying they have lost their money and the same is going to happen to us ... We are saving because we want our children to learn in ALFA. (SHG member)

That said, one SHG office bearer in Teff was observed coming into the Link School to try to remove her son from class to go and fetch water for her – he refused – suggesting that just because a mother has a positive attitude towards education, does not always mean that she will necessarily put the

educational needs of the child first. Arguably, however, she might have been making a rational decision based on what she knew about the quality of teaching/learning going on in that class.

In Hanja, however, **some respondents were less convinced of some women's attitude towards education at the outset.** One IP respondent argued that it is the lure of the SHG component that attracts mothers to the programme, and that otherwise their children would not be in school.

In rural areas, parents do not want to send their children to school unless they are well to do. Most want their children to look after the cattle ... and it is the same with the mothers in Geneva Global SHGs ... they are sending their children into ALFA because the programme has the SHG component.

A woreda official, however, maintained that even if it is the SHG seed money that initially draws mothers into the programme, they change their mind once their children start to do well at school.

Mothers' concern at first was only on the economic support, seed money, but when they see their children excelling in education, their attitude to education is changed.

The overwhelmingly pro-schooling stance of the mothers that were interviewed may, in some cases, be attributable to the fact that some of the mothers and children interviewed were not from the intended target group. There may be other families that have not been reached through the programme and who do not wish their children to participate in formal education. Indeed the kebele respondent in Teff alluded to this by saying that a few mothers prefer to keep their daughters at home doing household chores. This was also the view of one of the GGE respondents:

GGE respondent: *Psychologically we prepare the mother. Now whenever you go to the mother, the mother will tell you – "Are you going to give your daughter for marriage?" – "No." "Why?" She'll say, "She has to learn". This is an important attitudinal change that can be due to this programme.*

Interviewer: *So before some parents wouldn't educate their child?*

GGE respondent: *They are not so keen to educate girls, preferring her to stay at home, and to support the mother, and then get married. ... Geneva Global is helping to break this long-standing tradition [by persuading mothers to let their daughters attend Speed School]*

However, the fact that parents choose to keep their daughter at home does not necessarily indicate a negative attitude towards girls' education, as a couple of studies reviewed in Chapter 2 illustrate. Moreover, as some of the Young Lives research has shown in Ethiopia (see Tafere and Chuta, 2016), attitudes towards, and decisions about children's attendance or non-attendance at school may undergo revision and re-evaluation as circumstances and priorities change.

4.5. Ways in which SHGs support schooling

RQ 4 In what ways and to what extent are SHGs supporting children's schooling?

Given the limited M&E surrounding the SHGs, it is hard to gauge the extent to which the SHGs support schooling. In addition, since two of the six focus groups were current at the time of the research, and the financial returns for from the SHG are aimed at supporting the child in the year(s) following the Speed School year, it is too early to tell.

In all four case-study sites, however, SHG respondents reported that the groups helped to generate some income for them even where the SHG itself collapsed. Some of this income was reportedly spent on basic necessities, some of which supported children's schooling either directly (books, stationery), or indirectly (food, clothing). However, unless the group or individual business is able to sustain itself, the seed money and or savings will run out. This was the case for one of the dropouts interviewed in Hetto, who had transferred to the Link School, but then had to drop out in Grade 5:

My mother used to trade flour after with the savings she had when I was in Speed School ... This year she is no longer involved in trading because the money is finished.

In the successful group in Teff, however, the mothers specifically allocated some of their profits from the business to buy schoolbooks for the members.

As highlighted earlier (see Section 4.3 on *Saving*), the **SHG component also started a culture of saving among some mothers** who had either not thought of saving before or were unable to save previously for financial reasons, which may help their children to remain in school in the future in times of financial adversity.

The conditionality of having a child attending Speed School regularly in order for the mother to remain in the SHG may have ensured their continued prioritising of the child's schooling. The observed SHG meeting with the facilitator in Teff reported earlier in Section 4.2 (on *SHG procedures*) suggests that the SHG meetings can also help address issues of their child's attendance in the Link School even though the child's attendance was no longer a condition of group participation.

The fact that their children's education was reportedly often a focus of discussions in SHG meetings, which provide a forum for discussing any difficulties at school, may also have a positive impact on their children's persistence and success in formal education.

4.6 Conclusion

We conclude that **there is a substantial gap between the apparent overall aim of the SHG component of the Speed School programme** – to enable the mothers to engage in IGAs that can then support the Speed School child in their subsequent years of primary schooling in the Link School – **and the expected outcome of the SHG scheme**, which, according to some GGE staff members and IP respondents, is to encourage a culture of saving among the mothers and to bring about an attitudinal change that results in schooling being prioritised for children. (This presupposes that the mothers did not necessarily prioritise education before, which our findings indicate, was not necessarily the case – see below). Thus, one question is: what changes need to be made to the programme to enable the SHGs to bridge the gap from attitudinal change (if applicable) and an established culture of saving to actually being able to generate sufficient income to provide for the needs of the Speed School child in subsequent years, taking into account the opportunity costs of schooling?

In broad terms, there is strong evidence across the case-study sites to suggest that **significant change is necessary for the SHG programme to function more effectively: more rigorous selection procedures; more flexible group formation; a longer timeline; structural changes within GGE to provide more specialised, intensive and continuous training and support, and follow-up of the groups; more participatory needs analysis with individual SHGs; greater involvement of the ordinary members as well as the committee members; and systematic M&E. Such changes would have major budgetary implications.** The issue of training and support is crucial, as highlighted in the literature review in Section 2.2. At the moment, the word "training" with regard to the SHGs often seems shorthand for information-sharing, brainstorming, a meeting or a discussion, in which SHG members are told or encouraged to do something, rather than a negotiated, systematic, continuous, participatory, practical skills development programme, to fit each group's particular needs. By the same token, the CMs (who frequently seem to have handed over responsibility for the SHGs to the facilitators) themselves need to be appropriately qualified and experienced in SHGs, entrepreneurship, business skills and community development. One solution is to appoint new SHG-focused CMs that would undergo specialised training, such as the one GGE piloted in 2015/2016, in addition to further CPD. M&E is vital, not only of the SHGs but also of the IPs: for example, are the CMs doing what they are supposed to be doing with regards to supporting the SHGs? Currently, education-focused CMs are being expected to cover too many Speed School classes *and* SHGs, over too great a distance. Their lack of expertise in SHGs combined with an unmanageable workload makes it difficult for them to do their job well, and equally difficult for them to be held to account if they are not. The appointment of more suitably qualified SHG CMs, who are then properly oriented, trained and given more manageable workloads, would provide better support the SHGs; it would also enable CMs to be made more accountable.

There should be a reconsideration of using MFIs as the means of disbursing the seed money; currently, the delays and difficulties in accessing the seed money once it has been transferred to the MFI are affecting the morale of some SHGs, and causing office bearers to waste time and money in attempting to secure its release, where it is delayed. Is there an alternative to using an MFI?

There is also **a need to revisit the assumptions underpinning the conditionalities** involved in the rules for SHG membership, and decisions surrounding the timing of the release of the seed money. The insistence on the child's regular attendance in Speed School as being a prerequisite for membership of the SHG suggests that left to their own devices the mothers would not necessarily prioritise sending their child to school; similarly, the planned late release of the seed money, though sometimes justified in terms of needing to train the mothers to manage the money first, was more often viewed as an additional incentive to ensure their compliance in making sure their child went to school. The evidence from this study, however, suggests that many of the mothers interviewed already had positive attitudes towards education. Thus, rather than school attendance of the child being the condition that enabled women to belong to the SHG and enjoy its benefits, for many it was the other way round: membership of the SHG and the commitment to saving (even when there seemed little hope of receiving seed money) was the condition they endured to enable their child to be in Speed School.

Alternatives to SHGs

If the main priority is to cover the costs of a child's education for the duration of their primary schooling, **it is worth considering alternatives to SHGs**, such as **UCTs or CCTs**. Although these would perhaps involve greater sums of money over several years than are being given out in seed money currently, they would entail budgetary savings in the extra personnel and training that will otherwise be necessary for the SHG programme to function more effectively than it is doing at present. However, any calculation of what it would cost to support a child in school, through a CT for example, would need to take into account the opportunity costs of their schooling, not only the direct costs of purchasing their educational materials, which seems to be the case at the moment. Consideration would also be needed of the other dimensions of poverty, such as time, health and social exclusion and gendered intra-household decision-making processes in the different Ethiopian contexts.

More specific recommendations are made in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS: SPEED SCHOOL GRADUATES' EXPERIENCES

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we synthesise the case-study findings concerning Speed School graduates' experiences of schooling. We start with their experiences of Speed School. As explained in Chapter 3, while this was not an initial focus of this part of the study, during the pilot phase we realised that we could get richer data on the Speed School graduates' experiences in the Link School by inviting them to make comparisons with the Speed School experience. We therefore decided to enlarge the research focus. However, even when not explicitly asked to compare, students often made comparisons between the two systems of schooling. Thus, we start by outlining their experiences in Speed School, and what helped them learn, before considering their experiences in the Link Schools. Specifically, in this latter section, we focus on the in-school and out-of-school factors that support or hinder students' transition from Speed School, and their sustained access, retention and learning in the Link Schools. Though we have divided factors into 'out-of-school' and 'in-school', they often interact to assist or impede access to learning and/or enhance or diminish the quality of learning: for example, students may be late to school on account of household chores (an out-of-school factor) but this can be exacerbated by the teacher not allowing late comers to enter the classroom (an in-school factor).

Focus Speed School graduates

Table 5.1 summarises some of the key characteristics of the 18 focus Speed School graduates who were interviewed²¹ across the four case-study schools; they included graduates that were currently in Grades 5 or 7, or had dropped out of the Link School from those cohorts. Crucially, nine out of the 18 focus Speed School graduates were direct transfers from a Link School class into Speed School, while two attended Speed School rather than enter Link School in Grade 1 at the correct age. Thus, only seven of our focus Speed School graduates actually fulfilled GGE's selection criteria of being aged 914 and having either never been to school or having dropped out of school prior to attending Speed School. One of the GGE staff members said that GGE was aware of such selection issues, which the IPs had reported, but that in "90% of the cases" the right students were being selected. Since this is a qualitative study involving a very small sample of students, we cannot generalise, but the fact that only 39% of the students satisfied the selection criteria, and that some IP and woreda officials indicated it was a more widespread problem, selection clearly warrants further investigation with a much larger sample.

Related to this is the issue of dropout; we only managed to locate four Speed School graduates who had failed to make the transition from Speed School or had subsequently dropped out of the Link School who were willing to be interviewed (rather than the eight planned). Three of these had dropped out because of economic reasons – in two of the cases because of the family's inability to pay for the child's learning materials and clothing for the Link School, which the mother's participation in the SHG was meant to address. Importantly, as Table 5.1 shows, these three students had satisfied the Speed School selection criteria of being overage and having either dropped out of, or having never been to school prior to attending Speed School.

²¹ As explained in Chapter 3, one other female student from Hetto was interviewed but the audiofile was corrupted.

Table 5.1 Focus Speed School graduates – selected characteristics

Student ID ²²	Speed School year	Age*	Link School* (Which grade?)	Underage for Speed School?	Status prior to Speed School (Dropout (DO), non-entrant (NE), or transfer (TR)?)	Schooling prior to Speed School (Grade completed?)	Notes
ARF1	2013/2014	13	5	No	DO	G 2	Dropped out of school prior to Speed School due to accident
ARF2	2013/2014	12	5	No	NE	n/a	Very poor. One sibling dropped out and another is a non-entrant
ARM1	2013/2014	12	5	No	TR	G 4	Trades eggs & bananas
ARM2	2013/2014	9	5	Yes	NE	n/a	Very poor
ARFD	2013/2014	14	Dropped out of G 5 in Link School	No	TR	G 3	Dropped out due to fear of being teased (either about her illness or her stopping school to trade)
ARMD	2013/2014	15	Did not start Link School	No	DO	G 1	Very poor
HAF1	2011/2012	12	7	Yes	NE	n/a	
HAF2	2011/2012	13	7	No	TR	G 3	Very old parents and eight siblings
HAM1	2011/2012	13	7	No	TR	G 1	Very poor
HAM2	2011/2012	12	7	No	TR	G 2	Half-orphan
HAMD	2011/2012	12	Dropped out of G 4 from Link School	No	NE	n/a	Very poor. Mother & father have no permanent income; they work for other people.
HEM1	2011/2012	13	7	No	TR	G 3	His father is the Link School guard
HEM2	2011/2012	13	7	No	TR	G 3	Did paid work – was a shoe-shiner in G 4
HEMD	2011/2012	13	Dropped out of G 5 from Link School	No	NE	n/a	Father unable to work through disability. Earns money by carrying <i>khat</i> and helps his family.
TEF1	2013/2014	13	5	No	TR	G 1	Father teaches in the Link School
TEF2	2013/2014	13	5	No	NE	n/a	Sister dropped out at G 3 for early marriage
TEM1	2013/2014	11	5	No	DO	G 1	Dropped out through illness and is not yet fully recovered
TEM2	2013/2014	11	5	No	TR	G 1	Not from a poor family

* Age/grade at the time of the research in 2015/2016

²² Code for student ID: AR=Arishi, HA=Hanja, HE=Hetto, TE=Teff; M=male Speed School graduate, F=female Speed School graduate; D= Speed School graduate who has subsequently dropped out of school. Speed School graduates still attending Link School were numbered 1 or 2.

5.2 Graduates' experiences of Speed School

RQ 6 What are Speed School graduates' experiences of Speed School?

In all four case-study sites all Speed School graduates reported that their Speed School experiences had been very positive, and for some, life-changing. Their praise for the Speed School was often contrasted with their current less favourable learning experiences in the Link School and their learning experiences prior to Speed School, often in the same Link School. Importantly, not only did students affirm they had learned a lot but also that they had learned *how* to learn, and that what they had learned in Speed School was making it easy for them to do well in the Link School. This is a point that has also emerged strongly in the pedagogy study.

I liked ALFA²³ class and I was wishing that we learn fourth grade in ALFA ... because in ALFA they teach well. (female student, Arishi)

After I had ALFA I started understanding what I learned well and the education was good. (female student, Arishi)

If we never have got into ALFA we won't have got and continued in this school so it has changed our life in this way. (female student, Arishi)

We have good knowledge in ALFA and that makes the learning in the Link School easy for us. (male student, Hetto)

In ALFA each of us practises reading ... and we write it at home ... this is the skill that helps me up to now in the Link School. (male student, Teff)

The lessons here [in the Link School] are easy because I learned well in ALFA. (female student, Teff)

Thus, their Speed School experience provided a solid foundation for their successful learning in the Link School. This was also confirmed by community, government and IP respondents across the sites:

ALFA class is with good teaching and learning that brings quality education for this [learning in the Link School]. The students are good achievers here [in the Link School]... ALFA students are very creative and successful ... They do far better than community children in their reading skills. (staff respondent, Teff)

When I compare my kid with other students who learned in government school, they could not even say a prayer in Amharic, let alone English, so I think ALFA is better. (SHG member, Arishi)

The academic competence of ALFA students is remarkable ... they surpass other students in the government school ... the quality of education is high in ALFA. (kebele official, Teff)

Physical environment and resources

Generally, Speed School graduates reported better learning conditions and resources in the Speed School classrooms than in the Link Schools. They particularly liked the visual stimuli of pictures and labelled charts on the walls of the classroom, and when their own handiwork (clay models, for example) was displayed round the room.

The church compound is cool and comfortable to learn ... the class is full of pictures and models. (Hanja student)

However, in the only case-study school that was still hosting Speed School classes (Teff), the three classrooms were particularly small and dark and the students were observed adding dung onto the outside wall of the Speed School block to prevent it from collapsing and to improve its appearance. Female students in a group interview commented that tables and benches had been inadequate:

There are cases where up to five students sit at a single desk and some students push each other to get enough space to write. There was also a shortage of textbooks and this sometimes leads to arguments among students.

23 ALFA School was the name given to Speed School for some of the duration of the programme.

There are not enough chairs and tables but the Link School does provide some chairs and other materials. The issue is reported...but we were told that the budget is not allocated this year and to use what is available. (facilitator)

In Arishi too, at the time of the research, two Speed School classes were sharing one room in the FTC, as the other room was being used to store grain.

All students confirmed that they were provided with exercise books and pens three times a year and sites all had some supplementary and/or reference books, covered by the GGE budget. However, textbooks, which were supposed to be provided by the Link Schools, were often lacking, as they were for the Link School's own students, though usually the facilitator had a copy.

We are using the government curriculum and textbooks ... in some sites the Link Schools give us if they have extra. In some we may not even be able to get one text for the facilitator.... The Geneva Global budget is for supplementary books ...and textbooks are even not easily available in the market. (IP respondent)

One IP respondent felt that resources were unfairly distributed, favouring Speed School sites that were frequented by visitors.

Facilitator professionalism

Facilitator professionalism was commented on favourably by the Speed School graduates across the case-study sites in terms of attendance, punctuality, recording student attendance, lesson preparation and their interaction with students. Again this was often contrasted with the less favourable professionalism of many of the teachers in the Link Schools.

The facilitator follows up and supports all of us not to be absent and to understand. (male dropout, Hanja)

The facilitator arrives before us and prepares for class early in the morning. (male student, Hetto)

Some students noted that facilitators were occasionally absent but always for a good reason and they always arranged with a colleague to cover their class for them.

If [the facilitator] is absent due to a problem, he tells the other facilitators to teach us and they attend. (male student, Arishi)

In Arishi, there were reports of corporal punishment in Speed School, of students being made to kneel down and hit on the hand for various misdemeanours, especially, according to one female student, for being persistently late for school. If problems persisted, parents or guardians were contacted. School staff who were interviewed in this school, however, felt that some Speed School students had "behavioural problems" because facilitators did not know how to discipline properly, though it is unclear what they meant.

Pedagogy and facilitator-student relations

Facilitator-student relations were praised by students across all case-study sites. Although in one school facilitators were said to be strict, it was recognised as a positive trait.

More generally, however, the students considered the facilitators to be warm, friendly – often likened to an older brother, sister or parent – encouraging and motivating, and showing care for the individual. When asked to list the qualities of a good teacher, students often cited qualities they associated with the facilitators, both implicitly and explicitly. In response to this question one student replied:

When we compare the ALFA teachers with the teachers in the Link School the ALFA facilitators are the ones who take good care of us. (female student, Teff)

[The facilitator] even approaches us to see how we are doing when we accidentally meet him in the village. (male student, Hetto)

If we find homework difficult to do at home, he helped us individually until we understood. (male student, Arishi)

Several students who had previously studied in government school explained how they had not understood what was going on and were therefore not motivated to study. However, after a year of Speed School they were able to study effectively and felt motivated to succeed.

When I first learned in the government school, before I entered ALFA class there wasn't much that I knew but in ALFA class they teach us with different pictures and songs. (female dropout, Arishi)

I didn't give enough attention to my education because I didn't understand what I was learning in class [pre-Speed School] but after I started ALFA class I take my education seriously because I understand the lesson. (female student, Arishi)

Various aspects of **Speed School pedagogy** received frequent praise: **teaching all day, which allowed for revision in the afternoons; repeating material until all students understood; working in collaborative groups, sometimes preparing questions for each other; learning through activities such as music, songs, games, drawing and model-making; use of visual aids; having opportunities for individual work; and more participatory question-and-answer lessons:**

The lessons were easy for we revise again and again ... We ask and learn in a group ... The teacher also helps when we work in groups. (female student, Hanja)

We were encouraged to be in groups or pairs to prepare questions and ask each other. (male student, Hanja)

In the Speed School the facilitator teaches us again and again until we understand it well but this is not the case here in the Link School. (male student, Hanja)

When we work in a group we help each other on points we did not understand. (male student, Hetto)

We work in a group ... when there are points not clear for me I learn from my friends too ... We show and compare what we do and these helped me to understand what we learn. (male student, Arishi)

We were learning like playing and the things we learned as play have remained inside us like heritage. (female student, Arishi)

In two of the schools, the students emphasised the fact that facilitators set classwork and homework, which was checked, and the facilitators gave feedback.

The facilitators made us work in groups and individually ... They give us feedback. (male student)

Reading was another activity that **was regularly practised in class**, and several students mentioned that this had helped them to better cope with their studies in the Link School.

Study skills advice, such as how to make a study plan, was also highlighted in one school.

The **multi-lingual nature of classroom interaction was another important feature** of the classroom pedagogy that was valued by the graduates. Students appreciated being able to learn English and Amharic but also liked the fact that the facilitator always translated into the local language (Sidamu Afoo or Siltigna in the case-study sites) when necessary.

Several Link School staff and woreda supervisors across the case-studies also recognised that Speed School pedagogy was more effective:

Teaching methods in ALFA better equip students with knowledge and skill ... Learning with teaching aids ... learning through practice... and the whole day in class. (Link School teacher, Teff)

The only criticism of Speed School, made by one student, was that he found it boring to have the same teacher the whole time rather than different teachers for different subjects, as in the Link School. A student in another school also expressed a preference for having different teachers in one day.

Student-student relations

Speed School graduates in all four schools were universally positive about student-student relations in the Speed School classes: they described how they supported and helped each other in class, and played together outside class. Only in Teff, where they were short of furniture and books, students reported occasionally arguing over space and resources.

Learning and other outcomes

As a result of their Speed School experience many students said they understood the purpose of going to school, felt confident about their learning, and had learned how to learn. As highlighted earlier, students' learning in the Speed School generally enabled them to achieve well in the Link School. In particular, students emphasised the fact that they learned to read and how to study. One student contrasted the fact that in one year of Speed School she had learned to read whereas she had not in the three years of schooling she had experienced previously:

When [before] I entered ALFA class I didn't know how to read. I started everything in the ALFA class, so ALFA class is very useful to me. (female student, Arishi)

One male student also contrasted his ability to read now with the continued illiteracy of his peers in the Link School.

It is because of what I learned in Speed School that I can read better and know how to study. (male student, Hanja)

The reading and writing skill of Amharic and English I learned in Speed School was beneficial and helped me to have a good performance the Link School. (male student, Hanja)

My experience in ALFA helped me to develop reading and study skills. (male student, Hanja)

Even some of the SHG mothers commented on their child's ability to read:

My child even reads the Bible properly [unlike other children] and it is because of ALFA (SHG member, Arishi)

One mother also highlighted her child's increased motivation to attend school and study:

In ALFA he has never been absent; his motivation increases.

Another effect of the Speed School experience was **students' improved confidence in their academic ability, being able to answer questions and actively participate in lessons in the Link School** (see also Section 5.5, on *Learning and other outcomes*).

It helps me to have confidence in my academic performance, which I did not have previously. (male student, Hanja)

Students' improved performance in school may help explain why some students, despite having dropped out of school before (often the same school), were persisting in school the second time around, even when their economic situation at home remained challenging. As the Ethiopia 2015 EFA report put it:

Among the many factors that determine whether a child remains in the education system, whether or not a child and his/her family perceive learning improvements is central to the decision to leave school and take up alternative options (UNESCO, 2015:9).

Female students in a couple of school also appreciated being taught about personal hygiene.

As noted in Chapter 4, (section on *Selection of Speed School children and SHG members*), one unintended outcome of the Speed School success is that parents would prefer to have their children in Speed School, rather than in the Link School, which is causing some tension within communities, notably within Arishi:

When they see the achievement of ALFA graduates, everybody in the community wants to have their children in the ALFA class ... They quarrel with the committee ... want to take out their children from government school.

Other

There is also a suggestion in some students' own accounts in Arishi that they copied from the wall charts and posters in Speed School in order to answer test questions:

Even if we forget at exams, we look at the wall and we will find the answers there. (female student)

One suggested improvement to the programme from female students in Hanja was to spread the teaching over two years:

The contents are too much to learn in one year ... We were tight ... It would be better if we finish them in two years. (female student)

5.3 Speed School graduates' experience of the transition to Link School

RQ7 How do Speed School graduates experience the transition from Speed Schools to Link Schools?

Some Speed School graduates reported experiencing no challenges in making the transition to Link School; **though some students in three of the schools recounted some difficulties in adjusting, most of these were short-lived.** A former facilitator working in one of the Link Schools confirmed the initial apprehension of some after they transferred to the Link School:

In the first year, many things were strange for the students ... They even asked me ... about the number of students in the class ... how the teachers teach.

Some of the difficulties were related to getting used to larger classes, shorter school days, having different teachers for different subjects – which was preferred by some – and the different pedagogy, such as having to copy lots of notes from the board, which one facilitator noted students found boring:

They told me that as they write the whole thing from the textbook, they are getting tired of it.

It takes ALFA graduates some time to adjust in the Link School because of the class size, and the teaching methods. (Link School teacher, Teff)

Other problems that were recounted included awkward relations with peers, either in terms of “teasing” or getting used to disturbances, such as student late coming or poor student behaviour in class.

The first few weeks were difficult for me. I was mistreated by students, especially the older boys ... but in the long run it changed, and we began to work together. (male student, Hanja)

To some extent I was afraid and not comfortable for some time because students disturb... they do not respect teachers. (male student, Hanja)

One group of female students explained that they were teased on account of getting good grades.

In Arishi, where there were clearly tensions between some school staff and the programme, one student thought some of the teachers were initially sceptical, and even scornful, of Speed School graduates, doubting that could cover three years in one. However, this was eventually overcome:

Sometimes teachers said: ‘Who are these students ... How do they claim to finish all three grades in one year?’... But later they liked us when they find us following the lesson carefully, [and] doing the activities. They even select ALFA students for academic competitions.

The transition was made easier by the fact that many of the children were in the Link School before they had dropped out or, in the case of half of the focus graduates, they had transferred directly from the Link School into the Speed School classes. Where Speed School classes were held in the Link School premises, students were already familiar with the school environment. Besides, as several students and staff members pointed out, the graduates knew many of the other students because they came from the same village.

In Teff, the school management had helped the transition by including the Speed School classes in daily school assemblies.

However, one facilitator remarked that Speed School students, once in the Link School, had picked up the bad habits of coming late to school like other students and teachers.

5.4 Out-of-school factors affecting graduates' retention and learning in Link Schools

RQ 8 What out-of-school factors help or prevent Speed School graduates from making and/or sustaining the transition from Speed Schools to Link Schools?

RQ 9 What out-of-school factors help or prevent Speed School graduates from attending Link Schools regularly and learning?

RQ 10 What out-of-school factors cause Speed School graduates to drop out of Link Schools?

A point made in Chapter 3, worth reiterating here, is that in some cases respondents were making points about students or young people in general, especially regarding community or home factors affecting access, and not necessarily Speed School students.

Many of the reasons given for late coming, absenteeism and dropout or even non-enrolment relate to family poverty and the family's capacity to withstand shocks such as death and sickness in the family, or environmental shocks such as drought. In the most extreme cases students were often forced to miss and/or drop out of school to earn money. In some cases, parental (guardian) attitudes to formal education came into play; in other cases parents/guardians, or the children themselves, made strategic decisions, weighing up the potential of schooling to bring eventual economic returns to the family, in which the perceived quality of schooling on offer was taken into account, against the income-generating opportunities available in the area, which varied among the case-study sites. These decisions were always open to revision as circumstances changed.

When describing these out-of-school factors, respondents generally talked about students and/or young people in general, not necessarily Speed School students. However, Speed School graduates were said to be less likely to drop out of school in two of the case-study schools. On the other hand, in Arishi, one IP respondent explained that some parents whose children were selected for the Speed School programme immediately withdrew their children once they understood the children would need to study for two shifts, presumably because they needed the children to work for some part of the day.

Poverty and income-earning opportunities

Poverty was an issue in all four sites, which could result in non-enrolment, late coming, absenteeism, poor learning, grade repetition, and dropout. However, **responses to poverty also depended on the income-earning opportunities available** in the various sites.

Students in all schools, including Speed School graduates, combined schooling and paid work and/or unpaid family work. This, as woreda officials confirmed, was an issue that affected schools across the woredas. Better paid work was more generally available for older boys, though even younger boys were reportedly earning a few Birr for carrying *khat*, and girls sell false banana leaves, in which to wrap the *khat*. One of the Speed School graduates in Hetto was involved in the latter. In Teff, girls in particular were involved in trading, as the area has a strong history of female trading.

The income-earning opportunities and therefore the patterns of school absenteeism varied across the sites, in particular between the Sidama and Silte sites. Student involvement in *khat* trading had a major negative impact on student school attendance and retention in the three Sidama case-study schools and schools in the surrounding areas. In Hanja and Hetto *khat* and coffee were major cash crops providing income-earning opportunities; for coffee this was predominantly during the harvesting season (November to January), whereas *khat* harvesting and trading was year-round, though

productivity is higher during the rainy season. Hanja's proximity to a major *khat*-trading town too ensured that involvement in the *khat* trade was widely identified as the main reason for absenteeism, dropout or not entering school in the first place. In Arishi economic opportunities were not as plentiful and the money not as good, but there was vegetable production, such as cabbage, and young boys would go and wash cars and motorbikes for a couple of Birr.

Involvement in khat trading is the main reason for being absent and dropout – more for boys.
(teacher, Hanja)

Because it is a cash crop kebele, students are involved in working for khat or coffee traders ... and for this reason they do not attend class regularly. (school manager, Hanja)

Students drop out because they want to get money working for khat traders ... They do this even without family consent ... to spend it [the money] on better clothing. (kebele official, Hanja)

Children carry khat to the traders and they get money (3 Birr each time they take khat from the village to the market) ... they are involved, many because they are poor and ... they have to feed themselves and contribute to the family ... both older and young children are involved. (former facilitator, Hetto)

Student dropout is higher if they are from low-income families ... they begin to work for khat traders while they are in school and gradually drop out ... this is more for small boys. (woreda official, Shebedino)

Student absenteeism was said to be greater on market days in three of the four sites – which observations confirmed – and more generally across the woredas. In Arishi, even students from Speed School reportedly missed class on market day.

The availability of relatively well paid work from trading, be it from *khat* or *teff*, also caused some to question the need for formal education:

People simply consider the purpose of education as only to earn a living ... and comparing educated individuals' salary with what others get from trading, they become less interested with education.
(woreda official, Loka Abaya)

The major problem that affects education is the fact that it is cash crop area. Anybody can be involved simply in harvesting khat and earning money... and feels 'What do I need if I can get money like this?'
(principal, Hetto)

The kebele is highly affected by khat trading ... and older students get money, about 40 Birr a day and hence they prefer trading to education. (community respondent, Hetto)

In *Teff*, both girls and boys were reportedly late or absent for several days during the harvesting (November) and ploughing/sowing seasons (usually round May), depending on the rains, when parents needed them to help with farming. On the second visit to the school in November the research team found the school officially closed for the week, as well as other schools in the woreda, by order of the education authority, in order to harvest the *teff*. Interestingly, the Speed School classes were exempt from this.

In Hanja, Speed School graduates mentioned that in previous years students even missed class to pick sweet potato leaves on the school farm during the harvest:

In the previous years Grade 8 students used to work on the farm [picking sweet potato leaves] – on the school farm, which is rented for investors and they get money [20 Birr]...They did this even on school days.

However, as the KETB member explained, once the school realised the negative effect on school attendance, employing students was abandoned and women from the community were employed in their place, which researcher observations confirmed.

Of the 14 Speed School graduates that were interviewed and still in school, only one (male) student male was doing paid work at the time of the research – trading eggs and bananas – and admitted that

he missed class to earn the money, and that it affected his education, yet even so, he was doing well at school. Another male graduate had formerly done some paid shoe-shining but in his opposite shift, so said his studies had not been affected. Two other male students said they had to help with family farm work, including herding cattle and both sometimes missed class, yet are both still doing well at school.

Importantly, the three male Speed School graduate respondents that had dropped out from the Link Schools did so because family financial circumstances had forced them to go and earn money.

I am engaged in paid labour because my parents cannot provide food...they sometimes work and sometimes not ... but each day I fetch water for a pastry house in the village and for other people. The money I get is shared with the donkey cart owner... I give to my mother some money and she buys flour and cooks it with vegetables for the family. (male student who had dropped out of Grade 5, Hanja)

When I see the family situation... I felt I had to drop out and try something to help... my father also told me to drop out saying 'I cannot work and the family is in difficulties'... (male student, dropped out of Grade 5, Hetto)

The Hetto student reported that he used to miss class in order to carry *khat* even when in Grade 4 of the Link School, earning 3–5 Birr a load. He also works on the family's plot of land.

Although in two sites, school respondents noted that relative to other students, fewer Speed School graduates dropped out of school, nevertheless some had dropped out and some were at risk of dropping out, as the following cases illustrate:

... I look after the cattle and help my parents in agricultural activities ... because of that... I am sometimes late or absent. (male student, Grade 5, Teff, who earlier admitted his work is adversely affecting his studies).

My mum provides me with exercise books and pen but with much difficulty ... I waited five days or more to get them and I borrowed from friends until then. ... it is because she is poor. Sometimes I come to school with an empty stomach ... My mother is the only breadwinner. (male student, Grade 4, Hanja)

Sometimes I go to school without eating food because my parents cannot provide food consistently. I get hungry and even I cannot understand the lesson. (male student, Grade 5, Arishi)

Although rarely ... the thought of dropping out flashes through my mind ... when I am hungry ... and more when my clothes are worn out. (male student, Grade 4, Hanja)

Hunger was mentioned by the facilitator of Hanja as being a more widespread issue, and that after the “lunch break”, some of the Speed School students return to class without having eaten, which is likely to have detrimental effects on their ability to attend regularly, persist in school and/or to concentrate and learn effectively (Pridmore, 2007). A survey in Shebedino exploring the connection between breakfast eating habits and cognitive performance at school, found that around 42% of adolescents in the sample went without breakfast two or three times a week, and performed significantly worse on tests than those students who had breakfast every day (Adole and Ware, 2014).

In contrast, none of the seven female interviewees (including the dropout interviewed) were doing any paid work at the time of the research. They were, however, doing household chores, discussed below. The only female dropout we managed to interview had not dropped out on account of the need to earn money.

Household chores

Almost all student interviewees helped with household chores, such as fetching water and firewood, and respondents across the schools highlighted that **domestic duties were also a cause of late coming and absenteeism, which could sometimes lead to dropout**. Though household chores were said to affect both male and female students, it was acknowledged across respondent groups that girls in

particular were generally more affected. In both Arishi and Hetto, for example, mention was made of the fact that water scarcity in the dry season meant they had to go further to fetch water, which took longer, and was therefore more likely to make them late for school.

One of the challenges in the community is there is a shortage of water. ... The provision is not adequate for the population. Its impact on students' learning is that they are absent, or late because they go a long way to fetch water ... this is more the case with girls. (community respondent, Hetto)

In Teff, one kebele official commented that non-enrolment of girls by a minority of mothers was due to their preferring their daughters to stay at home and do household work. In contrast, the female Speed School graduates interviewed in Arishi said they were let off domestic tasks when they had homework to do.

Migration

Migration was another factor that could result in school dropout, and which was usually related to economic needs. In Teff, in particular, and in the Muslim-dominated woreda of Silti more generally, there was a strong tradition of family members migrating to Saudi Arabia to earn money, to send back to the family in the village; the potential to earn good money elsewhere had adversely affected interest in schooling for some.

Many students want to flee to Arab countries as of Grade 7/8. They model themselves on other older children who are living in Saudi, making money and sending it to parents. Some parents in the community also indirectly support their children's idea and their concern for education seems to decrease. (community official, Teff)

If the student's relative lives in an Arab country... thinking they will also get the chance to go, they will not be concerned about education. (community official, Teff)

Students' motivation and attitude to education is low ... in the area ... what is in the community's mind is to travel to Arab countries as some youths from the community who went to Saudi ... are sending money to their parents... The school children think it is better to go and make money like their fellow neighbours than being educated. (teacher, Teff)

There was also substantial migration within Ethiopia that could disrupt schooling as parents/guardians take children out of school to move to other areas to look for work. One CM mentioned that if the family moves woreda the child may not restart school if it's in the middle of the academic year.

Migration to urban areas was mentioned in three sites.

The students' motivation is low ... and even their parents want to involve them in trading ... and they go on to other towns to do some kind of job and get money. (woreda official, Arishi)

Some children are sent to towns by family for economic reasons ... the SHG income does not help that much. (IP respondent, Teff)

Or students themselves leave the area either temporarily, for example to harvest coffee, or permanently, in search of employment. Some students were said to miss school to earn money without their families' knowledge.

In Arishi, an area prone to drought and suffering from water scarcity at the time of the research, some parents make their male children miss school to look after cattle in the dry season, especially in drought years, when they have to look for water elsewhere.

... in drought seasons, the students also drop out because the family moves to other places (IP respondent, Arishi)

In Hanja and Hetto, it was reported that in very poor families, children are sometimes forced to migrate to live with relatives or are fostered out to other adults because the parents can't afford to keep them at home. This was the case for the younger sister of one of the focus Speed School graduates in Hanja, and a daughter of one of the focus SHG mothers in Teff. The move often disrupts or may put an end

to schooling as children in these circumstances are often treated as unpaid labour (Jennings *et al.*, 2011).

Peer pressure

Peer pressure too was also mentioned as a factor that encouraged dropout, when peers were earning good money and those in school were not. In Arishi, one of the mothers reported that her foster child, who was a Speed School graduate had dropped out as soon as he registered in the Link School, arguing that other children of his age were earning good money working.

In three of the case-study sites respondents noted that some students from poor families – girls in particular – feel ashamed of their appearance and so feel pressure to earn money to buy clothes and accessories to look as nice as some of their better off contemporaries.

I personally approach girls, what they tell me is that ... look at Mr X's and Mr Y's daughters we are in the same class ... but they are always well dressed and they have no problem but look at mine I feel ashamed and if I get involved in trading I can wear better dresses and get cosmetics. (community respondent, Teff)

Students drop out due to the family's economic situation ... when students' [girls'] clothing and other needs are not fulfilled, they feel as if they are inferior and prefer to drop out. (school management, Hanja)

The students see other individuals of their age involving in khat trading ... getting money and wearing better clothes. This influences them to drop out and join the khat trading. (IP respondent, Arishi)

Teff's strong community action addressing the dropout of Muslim girls

Recently a ban came into force, forbidding females from wearing a niqab in school, and in all other government buildings. The ban came about in response to the increasing numbers of young Muslim women being urged to wear the niqab by conservative Muslims. As a result of the ruling, a number of young female students dropped out of school, including about twelve in Teff, but the KETB and PSTA worked together with religious leaders to persuade them to go back to school:

Some tended to drop out but religious elders convinced them and they are back in school. (woreda official)

Community attitudes to education

The **negative or indifferent attitude towards formal schooling by some community members** was also mentioned by woreda officials as a factor affecting dropout or non-enrolment in all four schools, and more broadly across the woredas. Various factors were identified as influencing community attitudes: poverty, as already highlighted, has forced some families to prioritise opportunities to earn income for the family and/or help out with other family work over formal education; in two sites, lack of employment opportunities for graduates from Grade 10 was given as another reason for students and parents/guardians to question the value of schooling:

These days there are many students whose performance is not good in the Grade 10 national exam. Many did not get employed and are back home engaged in family farming. This discourages others not to be serious with their education. (community official, Teff)

The community is saying what did the children get from schooling if they will be farmers in the end, like us? (community official, Teff)

... and there are many who simply completed Secondary School with low results and are idle at home. Seeing this, younger sisters and parents get frustrated and tend to leave school early and start a different life. (community official, Teff)

In Hetto, it was widely agreed that interest in schooling within the community was on the wane, resulting in non-enrolment, absenteeism and/or dropout. Efforts were also being made by the school to change community attitudes and create awareness about the benefits of education, through kebele

and community meetings – in churches for example, according to one woreda official. However, they face challenges:

The school tries to create awareness ... but they [dropouts] watching those who completed Grade 10 and remain unemployed ask what the benefit of going to school will be. (Shebedino woreda official)

In Hanja, the community attitude to education was said to be positive with high levels of community participation in school issues. The principal has also said the community is eager to see the school improved and the elders were also helping the schools in many affairs. In Teff too, community support for schooling, and the case-study school, was widely said to be good, though as highlighted above, this was tempered in the minds of some by graduates' lack of employment opportunities in the end. Prevailing traditional attitudes that undervalue the importance of education for girls were also said to still hold influence in the community, according to one community official, with some girls still not being sent to school.

In Arishi, although one of the facilitators stated that the village elders were supportive, school management thought that parents were not helping the school address students' poor attendance. However, the KETB respondent ascribed this apparent apathy by some parents to their dissatisfaction with the school, and commented that were looking elsewhere to educate their children:

Some parents prefer to send their children to another school ... like ALFA because they want good education for their children ... They even send them to another town.

This highlights the importance of school quality being a key factor to take into account when talking about parental attitudes towards education. It is backed up by the fact that so many parents were pushing to get their child accepted for Speed School – thereby exhibiting a lot of interest in education – because they perceived the quality of schooling to be good. School quality issues are discussed further below in the section on 'in-school factors'.

Early marriage

For female students early marriage was widely identified as a cause of dropout in all four schools, and more generally was highlighted in the two Sidama woredas, although numbers were said to be falling due to government awareness-raising advocacy campaigns.

Students when admitted to Speed School are overage ... if the girls are 12–14 ... they will get married after attending a year or two in the Link School. It is the culture in that community. (woreda official, Loka Abaya)

In Hetto one of the Grade 7 Speed School graduates never made the planned interview as she had dropped out to get married, while in Hanja one of the Speed School graduates had dropped out to give birth. A woreda official thought that teenage pregnancy was a widespread issue in Loka Abaya with girls as young as 12 affected. The threat of abduction or the danger of girls being persuaded into marriage also prompted some parents to look elsewhere for their education, according to one SHG member:

I and many parents want to send their daughters to another town because this place is not safe for grown-up girls. (SHG member).

This echoes Semela and Woldie's (2015) finding in their SNNPR survey that girls sometimes miss school on account of fear or stress surrounding abduction and early marriage. In Teff, an informal discussion with one community resident suggested that some parents avoid the social pressure of marrying off their daughter to a local man by sending her to an Arab country to earn money. They related the fact that to address the problem of early marriage, the KETB had discussed the issue with the community and all agreed not to hold marriages once the academic year has started. The woreda education supervisor was of the same view:

...in the Link School it is not a problem; even those who married were made to return to school because of the kebele involvement

Health issues

Illness was mentioned as a reason for dropout by various respondents in two of the schools (Arishi and Teff); several of the focus Speed School graduates had their schooling interrupted by illness or on account of an accident, either to themselves or to a family member. In Hetto, one male student had dropped out of the Link School in order to help earn money since his father was permanently paralyzed and unable to work. In Arishi, two of the female students had been affected: one missed three weeks of school through illness and then had stayed away because of being teased about it by her peers²⁴ while another had had her schooling interrupted prior to joining the Speed School due to a motorbike accident. (See also the section above on *Hunger*).

Community support

The negative impact of the factors highlighted above that were pulling students out of school (as well as those to be discussed in the next section, which were pushing students out of school) **were mitigated to some extent by community-school support and action**, which varied in form and effectiveness across the sites. In Teff and Hanja the PSTA and KETB were said to be very effective, in Hetto fairly effective, though not as strong as it used to be, whereas in Arishi the PSTA and KETB, which were said to be the same entity, were not really functioning.

In Teff, above all, there were clearly high levels of successful community involvement in the school by the KETB and PSTA and strong communication between the school's management and these bodies. The successful response by the two bodies to ruling on the *niqab* in school – see Box 5.1 – is a case in point. So too their strategy addressing early marriage, also mentioned above. The PSTA chair was also frequently visible in school either discussing with school management, staff or students, or observing school proceedings, checking that teachers were in class teaching, for example. School management and the PSTA had also established a dropout-returnee committee at both class and school level, which they claimed had helped reduce the dropout rate to zero for 2014/2015. The woreda school supervisor confirmed this:

The KETB is highly involved in creating good school environment for learning, mobilizing the community for school support ... working closely with school on dropout issues.

PSTA involvement is high and effective; it follows up on students' behaviour, dropout, late coming, attendance.

In Hanja, the KETB was said to provide support in addressing dropout; and village elders and church leaders were also involved in supporting the school.

5.5. In-school factors affecting graduates' retention and learning in Link Schools

RQ 11 What in-school factors help or prevent Speed School graduates from attending Link Schools regularly?

RQ 12 What in-school factors contribute to Speed School graduates dropping out of Link Schools?

RQ 13 What challenges to learning do Speed School graduates experience inside Link Schools?

Physical environment and resources

Though **the quality of the learning environment and the adequacy of the resources varied across the schools**, there were **aspects of both across all four sites that hindered student attendance and/or learning**. In Arishi, in particular, the most rural of the four sites, and the school that seemed to have the most problems in terms of leadership and school-community relations, the infrastructure and resources were the poorest, though the largest class sizes (between 60–70 and above) were recorded in Teff.

Students didn't comment much on the schools' external surroundings beyond a couple of students appreciating the shady trees in two of the schools, and liking the educational paintings on the outside

²⁴ Though her peers were heard teasing her for dropping out to trade rather than on account of being ill.

of buildings in two schools. The libraries, however, drew a number of criticisms from students as **all four school libraries suffered from a shortage of books**, especially Arishi, whose library was by far the worse resourced. Libraries were important resources for student learning, especially given the fact that textbooks were in short supply in all four schools in some subjects – students shared in their 1-5/6 groups in class – and because students went to the library to study when the teachers were absent. In Hanja, Hetto and Teff, students could borrow books for 2–3 days. The paucity of textbooks in the Link Schools also has implications for the schools’ ability to provide textbooks to Speed School classes.

In Hetto, during the first semester, students complained that the librarian was often absent and the library locked, which observations confirmed. Although during the second semester, the library started to open on time and students reported being allowed to use it until 8pm, this change was thought to have been motivated by the school’s push to win selection to become a model school, so it was not known whether the improved availability would last beyond the competition, especially since it was principal who was attending to the library; there was no librarian in place. In Hanja, the students complained that the library didn’t have enough books either in terms of numbers or variety. Teff’s school library was only for Grades 5 and above though a new library was being built for the lower grades too. With no electricity in the kebele, the school had bought a solar-charged small lamp to enable Grade 8 students to study there until 8:00pm on schooldays, supervised by the librarian.

Classrooms were generally not very conducive to studying in any of the schools, being dark and gloomy, with mainly earthen walls and small, ill-situated and/or cracked chalk boards in three of the schools. Teff, however, had a few superior classrooms, which were larger and brighter with good cement floors, larger windows and large, better quality chalk boards. See Table 5.2. Given the teachers’ reliance on students copying notes from the board the poor quality of some of the boards hampered some students’ ability to read what is written from the back and/or sides of the room (see Table 5.2), echoing the results in Hall et al.’s (2008) national survey of primary school children in which 10% students (female 12%, male 8%) reported difficulty in seeing the board.

There was very little evidence of wall charts and other teaching aids being used, despite their existence in the pedagogy centres of three of the schools. Similarly, **very little educational material or student work was on the walls to stimulate and inspire learning**, unlike in the Speed School classrooms, although there were two classrooms in Teff with some student work on the wall.

In two schools, however, students mentioned liking the rare occasions when visual aids were used:

Even if it is not comparable with ALFA, some teachers bring charts and pictures to class. (male student, Arishi)

This may have been for the benefit of teacher appraisals. In both Hetto and Hanja principals reported checking to see which teachers signed out teaching aids from the pedagogy centre, to be used as evidence in teachers’ formal assessments although signing out a teaching aid did not necessarily mean that it was used in class.

As indicated in Table 5.2, the **adequacy of classroom furniture also varied**: in Arishi and Hanja for the lessons observed there were generally sufficient desks and tables to accommodate all students on the register, whereas in the larger classes of Hetto and Teff, there was only sufficient seating for the number of students present in class. Broken furniture was seen piled up in the corner of classrooms in Arishi. In Hanja, students complained of the quality of the desks, saying they preferred to write on their knees.

Though students did not talk about it, **three of the schools lacked water** for students to either drink or wash their hands after going to the toilet, which is a concern, both for health reasons (Wateraid, 2005) and because it affects student attendance (Sarton et al., 2009; Zike and Ayele, 2015). Teff, however, had acquired a donkey to fetch water for staff.

Table 5.2 Classroom observations – selected features

Lesson	Grade	Register*	Attendance	MOI	Condition of chalk board	Adequacy of furniture
AR Obs 1	5	F: 19 M: 29 T = 48	F: 21 M: 24 T = 45	Mainly: <i>Sidamu Afoo</i> Some: <i>Amharic & English</i>	Poor (has holes) Not legible for a few sts	Average condition Enough for all registered sts
AR Obs 2	5	F: 20 M: 29 T = 49	F: 15 M: 19 T = 34	Mainly <i>English/Amharic</i>	Poor Not legible for a few sts	Average condition Enough for all registered sts
AR Obs 3	5	F: 19 M: 29 T = 48	F: 7 M: 12 T = 19	Mainly: <i>English/Amharic</i> Some: <i>Sidamu Afoo</i>	Poor (has holes) Not legible for a few sts	Average condition Enough for all registered sts
AR Obs 4	5	F: 31 M: 15 T = 46	F: 11 M: 7 T = 18	All : <i>English</i>	Good Legible for most sts	Average condition Enough for all registered sts
HA Obs 1	7	F: 27 M: 26 T = 53	F: 19 M: 13 T = 32	Mainly: <i>English</i> Some: <i>Sidamu Afoo</i>	Average Legible for most sts	Average condition Enough for all registered sts
HA Obs 2	7	F: 25 M: 22 T = 46	F: 19 M: 15 T = 24	Mainly: <i>Amharic</i> Some: <i>English & Sidamu Afoo</i>	Average Not legible for a few sts	Average condition Enough for all registered sts
HA Obs 3	7	F: 21 M: 17 T = 38	F: 8 M: 16 T = 24	Mainly: <i>English</i> Some: <i>Sidamu Afoo & Amharic</i>	Average Legible for most sts	Average condition Enough for all registered sts
HA Obs 4	7	F: 18 M: 21 T = 39*	F: 11 M: 13 T = 26	Mainly: <i>English</i> Some: <i>Sidamu Afoo</i>	Average Legible for most sts	Average condition Enough for all registered sts
HE Obs 1	7	F: 32 M: 41 T = 73	F: 14 M: 26 T = 40	Mainly: <i>English</i> Some: <i>Sidamu Afoo</i>	Average Not legible for a few sts	Average condition Enough for sts present (not for all registered sts)
HE Obs 2	7	F: 38 M: 28 T = 66	F: 23 M: 29 T = 52	Mainly: <i>Amharic/English</i> Some: <i>Sidamu Afoo</i>	Average Not legible for a few sts	Average condition Enough for all registered sts
HE Obs 3	7	F: 38 M: 28 T = 66	F: 28 M: 19 T = 47	Mainly: <i>English</i> Some: <i>Sidamu Afoo & Amharic</i>	Average Not legible for a few sts	Average condition Enough for sts present (not for all registered sts)
HE Obs 4	7	F: 37 M: 33 T = 70	F: 25 M: 26 T = 51	Mainly: <i>English</i> Some: <i>Sidamu Afoo & Amharic</i>	Poor Not legible for a few sts	Average condition Enough for sts present (not for all registered sts)
TE Obs 1	5	F: 27 M: 34 T = 61	F: 15 M: 21 T = 36	Mainly: <i>Amharic</i> Some: <i>Siltigna</i>	Good Legible for most sts	Average condition Enough for sts present (not for all registered sts)
TE Obs 2	5	F: 28 M: 34 T = 62	F: 23 M: 32 T = 55	Mainly: <i>English</i> Some: <i>Siltigna</i>	Good Legible for most sts	Average condition Enough for sts present (not for all registered sts)
TE Obs 3	5	F: 27 M: 34 T = 61	F: 19 M: 17 T = 36	Mainly: <i>English</i> Some: <i>Siltigna/Amharic</i>	Good Legible for most sts	Average condition Enough for sts present (not for all registered sts)
TE Obs 4	5	F: 28 M: 34 T = 62	F: 11 M: 21 T = 32	Mainly: <i>English</i> Some: <i>Amharic/Siltigna</i>	Good Legible for most sts	Average condition

						Enough for sts present (not for all registered sts)
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* In some cases, the same class has different numbers of students on the register depending on whether it was a first or second semester register.

Although all sites possessed gender-segregated toilets, toilets were filthy and lacked privacy, apart from in Teff, where they were in average condition. As pointed out in the literature review, lack of well-situated, clean and private toilets with washing facilities can result in many female students missing school during menstruation, and can contribute to their dropping out (Tegegne and Sisay, 2014). That said, research elsewhere has shown that availability of clean gender-segregated toilets alone is no guarantee that they will be used by students (Humphreys with Crawford, 2014).

Teacher professionalism

The lack of teacher professionalism, possibly due to low motivation (see Chapter 2) and/or poor leadership and management (see section below on *School management*) in some schools was a major factor affecting student attendance, retention and learning across the woredas; among and within the case-study schools the levels of teacher professionalism varied. Frequent teacher late coming and absenteeism was reported in Arishi and Hetto; it was less frequent and only with some teachers in Hanja, and rare in Teff, though lessons often started late. In Hetto, one student reported that teachers were sometimes present, but not necessarily in class and teaching, which researcher observations confirmed. One Arishi student reported that she sometimes went home without having attended any lessons:

In the Link School sometimes we learn only two class in a day [in a shift]. Sometimes we go home without learning any class at all. (female student, Arishi)

In the Speed School we learn all subjects but here ... we learn four out of six [periods]... Teachers are absent ... or we see them sitting in the staffroom. (male student, Hetto)

In Hanja and Hetto, teachers who commuted from Hawassa often blamed the public transport and road construction for arriving late. And other teachers in those schools, as well as in Arishi, often went to Hawassa for the weekend and came back late on Monday morning. In addition to depriving students of learning time in class, less time in class meant that teachers did not necessarily cover the syllabus. Moreover, teacher absenteeism and late coming also set a poor example to students. It is probably no coincidence that in the two schools where teacher late coming and absenteeism was high, student late coming and absenteeism was similarly high, although in the second semester in Hetto, there was a more concerted crackdown on teacher absenteeism by management. An informal chat with one teacher suggested that this related to the pressure of competing to be a model school.

Other issues of teacher professionalism worth mention include the persistence of corporal punishment, reported by students and/or witnessed in all four schools. Echoing other studies on corporal punishment in Ethiopia (e.g. Save the Children *et al.*, 2008), a common practice was to make students kneel down, or cane students on the hand for persistent late coming. Monitors too were seen carrying canes in two schools. In one class, where the teacher reportedly sometimes hit students with his shoe, it was said to have reduced classroom participation as students feared the teacher. Ironically, this was a teacher who was attempting to use interactive teaching/learning methods. In another school, one student commented that it was not fair to beat students with a stick. In general, though students made little mention of corporal punishment, perhaps because they were used to it and accepted it.

On the positive side, Speed School graduates in all four schools thought that teachers generally treated students fairly and did not show favouritism, which observations tended to confirm.

Teachers show no discrimination in treatment. They mix us in groups and treat us the same way as each other. (male student, Teff)

The teachers treat us the same way ... and even they appreciate us in the class for we are active participants in the class. (female student, Hanja)

However, not all the teachers were said to be as friendly as the Speed School facilitators (see *Pedagogy and teacher-student relations*, below).

Setting and marking of classwork and homework was another matter of concern in the three Sidama schools. In Arishi, students said teachers rarely marked homework but sometimes checked classwork during the lesson. In Hanja, homework and classwork was reportedly rarely marked; in Hetto, students said a number of teachers set homework and classwork but only some marked them, whereas others did not even set either classwork or homework. In Teff, this was not reported as a problem; however, even there, when classwork was observed being marked, teachers usually only managed to mark some of the student books, before moving on to the next activity. This is hardly surprising given the high student numbers in class. Lack of feedback on student written work inevitably hampers student learning.

The **unreliability of attendance data** is another matter that indirectly affects the Speed School programme. In Arishi, students complained that the homeroom teacher didn't always take the register. One female student related an incident when their homeroom teacher had come to class to take the register, but upon seeing so few students, went away again without doing so. Informal conversations with school staff and woreda officials in all four schools confirmed that some homeroom teachers (in these and other schools) do not take the registers; indeed, they themselves may be absent on some days. In informal discussions, teachers in **one school acknowledged that they do not write the exact number of days in the register when students are absent a lot because they think it reflects badly on them as teachers**, since registers are theoretically used as part of teacher assessment. This may explain why staff in all four schools were unwilling to give researchers access to school registers. The fact that GGE pays principals ETB 100 for them to provide tracking data is another possible incentive that might prompt some principals to over-report enrolment and attendance. Conversely, according to one GGE respondent, **once the payment is stopped after Speed School classes are no longer held in the school, some schools are reluctant to provide the tracking data**. Tracking difficulties are compounded by some students changing names, or moving to another area. Similarly, there are incentives for schools to inflate EMIS enrolment figures for submission to the woreda in order to gain access to greater resources for the school; although part of the woreda school supervisor's brief is to verify school enrolments, it is a difficult task.

While the ad-hoc nature of taking attendance registers and the consequent unreliability of the figures does not directly impact on student retention or learning, it **has implications for GGE's accurate and meaningful tracking of Speed School graduates**, and the ability to identify students who may be at risk of dropping out through poor attendance.

Pedagogy and teacher-student relations

Another **major impediment to student learning was classroom pedagogy**, which students across the schools often compared unfavourably with the way they were taught in Speed School. Interviews with respondents and classroom observations across all four schools indicated that traditional teacher-fronted "chalk-and-talk" predominated, with limited student participation, usually confined to selected individuals answering questions demanding factual recall, in writing or orally. This resonates with other classroom research in Ethiopia (e.g. Heugh *et al.*, 2013; Frost and Little, 2014)

Although students were seated in groups, this was as much a reflection of the general political and administrative system in Ethiopia of 1–5 groupings in rural communities, as an affirmation of including collaborative and cooperative learning in lessons. The leaders of the 1–5(6) groupings were often Speed School graduates. They were responsible for giving exercises/questions for group members to

practise and they also led group discussions, and explained concepts that the members found difficult, as well as reporting on student behaviour and absenteeism.

In Teff Primary School, there was some evidence of group work: in two of the classroom observations, teachers gave group activities and asked the students to do them together in their group exercise book. According to the students, this was quite a common practice with some teachers. In Hanja, in a couple of lessons, teachers were observed asking students to engage in group discussion. However, some students were observed still copying down the question or the notes from the board while two students discussed. Teachers did not follow up to see whether the students were working in groups or not.

On the whole though, **despite students' preference for interactive and participatory classes in the Speed School**, as described earlier (see Section 5.2, *Pedagogy and facilitator-student relations*), **they were fairly accepting of the more traditional teaching methods in the Link School, involving being lectured at and a lot of copying from the board** – though with one or two exceptions. However, **they were critical of the following features** of many teachers' classroom teaching, specifically:

- **Writing notes on the board without explaining;**
- **Not repeating explanations until all students understand;**
- **Not marking class or homework;**
- **Not revising material that was covered previously.**

In ALFA lessons we have practical lessons, learning in music, posters [on the wall]. We also make things ... Here all those things are non-existent. The teacher simply explains and goes out. (male student, Arishi)

The difference between Speed School classes and here [Link School]... is in the Speed School we learn and re-learn the points until all of us understand... the teacher explains but here there are teachers who simply write notes and do not explain. (female student, Hanja)

[a bad teacher is] the one who write notes on the board and finishes the class without explaining and the one who misses class. (female student, Teff)

Some teachers write many notes and leave without explaining saying: 'There is no time. We will discuss next period'... but they simply pass to the other subject when they come next time. (male student, Hetto)

The **medium of instruction was another area of concern**; although in one school female students were keen for teachers to use more English, more generally students were concerned about teachers not translating from English and/or Amharic into the local language. Some teachers were unable to do this because they did not speak the language.

Even though teachers are supposed to teach in English after Grade 5, they mostly teach in Siltigna language. But we prefer to learn in English because we want to know English better. (female student, Teff)

In ALFA class it was easy for me to understand the lesson for it is translated in Sidamu-Afoo but here the lesson is difficult for me when some teachers use only English. (female student, Hanja)

They [students] knew the answer to the questions but the language is difficult for them. (female student, Arishi)

As one teacher explained:

I translate into the local language because the students do not understand what is said in English. And the students' participation is less if I do not translate. (teacher, Arishi)

Observations confirmed that **at various stages in many classes there were some students who seemed to struggle to follow the lesson and/or were distracted**. At the same time, the Speed School graduate interviewees expressed a general preference for learning in Amharic, with some English, as

they think it will help them prepare for secondary school and more generally in the future. Yet, as the teachers and school supervisor pointed out, and observations and student interviews confirmed, many students struggle to understand Amharic, and experience even greater difficulty with English. This was evident in the interviews with students, which were held in the local language, not only so that students would feel more at ease in their discussion, but because many found it difficult to understand and interact in Amharic, and far less in English, the medium of instruction (and therefore of examinations) in Grades 5 and 7.

School principals and woreda school supervisors acknowledged that **many teachers had problems with lesson planning, classroom management, student-centred learning, providing student feedback and the application of CA** – which more often than not entailed constant testing.

Teachers' use of a participatory approach is improved but still there are some who do not use participatory methods of teaching. (Hanja principal)

There are gaps in using a participatory approach and the school identified that some teachers give a lot of notes [on the board], which does not allow students to participate. (Hetto principal)

One woreda official felt that these sorts of teaching methods did not encourage enrolment among younger students:

The way teachers teach cannot attract younger students to be keen on education and to come to school, ... especially in the lower grades; using participatory methods helps to motivate students. (woreda official, Arishi)

Reasons given for the lack of change in teaching methods, according to principals and woreda officials, included degree holders not being trained in pedagogy on their course and diploma holders teaching subjects they were not trained in – the latter echoing findings in other studies (e.g. CfBT, 2009; Abede & Woldehamme, 2013) – though lack of teacher motivation was also seen as a key factor.

When there is a shortage of teachers, some who do not take pedagogy courses are assigned to teach...they cannot teach with the right methodology.

With some teachers there is a problem of lesson preparation and teaching skills and more of lack of commitment.

Teacher-student relations varied: in Hanja interviews and observations confirmed that they were generally positive, whereas in Arishi they were said to be quite formal and distant, which observations tended to confirm.

Teachers' relations with students is not to the extent to make students like to come to school. (woreda official, Arishi)

In Hetto and Teff, some teachers were said to be less distant and more encouraging, and others not. In observations, the more encouraging teachers managed to elicit greater student participation.

Student-student relations

Student-student relations across all four sites were generally said to be good and researcher observations confirmed this. Reasons given were that the students already knew each other, as they came from the same village, and because the Speed School graduates often assisted other students with their classwork, which helped to create a bond.

I had no problem of interacting with other students since we know each other in the village and here in the school. (male student, Teff)

Many of the students are coming from the same village and know each other very well and as the result there is friendly relationship among us. (male student, Hanja)

Friendship is not difficult as we are from the same village and. ... I helped other students the first year I joined the Link School. (male student, Teff)

They are group leaders and initiate and support other students. Their relation with other students is good, cooperative. (teacher, Hanja)

That said, in all four schools some fighting and name-calling was reported, generally among boys. The name-calling was often by older boys to younger students (both female and male) who were doing well academically, which included many of the Speed School graduates. However, none reported that it had affected their attitude towards school, their attendance, or their classroom participation.

Some older boys [who are academically poor] scorn and insult or mistreat young students who excel academically. (male student, Teff)

The exception was a female Speed School graduate in Hanja who had dropped out of school in Grade 5 because she had missed three weeks of school through illness and was worried about being teased about her absence by her classmates and other children in the village:

My classmates are very bad children, and the kids from my neighbourhood also tease me about my illness. That [the teasing] is why I stopped coming to school. (female dropout)

The teasing was confirmed since while she was walking with the researcher, other students were heard scorning her, though not about her illness, rather about dropping out of school for the sake of earning money through trading.

Learning and other outcomes

It was widely cited across all four case-study sites that **Speed School graduates are generally some of the highest attainers in the Link Schools**. Woreda and kebele officials school principals and even the students themselves recognised this, highlighting their greater motivation, better attendance, classroom participation and good behaviour as contributing to their success.

We evaluate ALFA students' reading performance while we assess the Link School in Grades 1–4. We find that the [Speed School] students' performance is excellent... they are active; they properly identify letters in the first phase; they can also read letters. (woreda official, Teff)

ALFA students are models for other students because of their academic achievement, which has a positive impact. (woreda official, Arishi)

ALFA graduates are 1-5 leaders because of their academic achievement ... they even help other students in the class. (school manager, Arishi)

They ask... participate... they inform if they have any problem and have a good relationship with teachers...their attendance is also better than other students ... and they are also disciplined and with good behaviour. (teacher, Arishi)

ALFA graduates are better than Link School students in performance. There are some kids in our class (Grade 5) who cannot read and write. ... Let alone Grade 5, there are students who cannot read in Grade 7. (female student, Arishi)

In Hanja, one Speed School graduate who had performed outstandingly academically was invited to Addis Ababa to receive a special award.

Various respondents **attributed the academic success of the Speed School graduates to the good foundation they received in Speed School**: the participatory methodology, and facilitators' ability to follow-up and support because of the small class size.

In ALFA quality education is given and it is a good foundation for the students. As a result, ALFA students are doing great in the Link School. (teacher, Hanja)

ALFA students are academically competent ... The methodology there helped them be so. They were winners in the Question and Answer competition held in the school this year. (woreda official, Arishi)

The programme ALFA's success is that it helps to inspire the students to have high motivation and interest in education. The ALFA experience helps them to use their time properly. ALFA graduates keep

their hygiene and they are different from other students with this respect. ALFA students' attendance is good. They are models. They use the library better than others. (school manager, Hanja)

Speed Schools are known for providing quality education, which makes students academically competent. (kebele official, Teff)

Because of their Speed School experience the students are interested and motivated about education. They are not absent ... parents also follow up. (woreda official, Hanja)

And they have also developed a strong interest and motivation for their education.... Were all education like Speed School, no child would have a low academic performance. (woreda official, Hanja)

They are better off academically because I think of the pedagogy in ALFA ... they use active and participatory approach. ALFA students stood first and many of them are among the top-ranking students. (school manager, Arishi)

However, the principal in Hetto revealed that although some Speed School students are doing very well academically, **some are only managing average or low attainment**. In Arishi too, the fact that half the schools' Speed School graduates are in Grades 1–3 suggest that some may not be doing so well, though their being underage was a reason given for the placement of some in lower grades.

A point made earlier about student health should be reiterated here; several respondents mentioned that **some students come to school hungry**; this is bound to influence their ability to concentrate and learn, as indeed one student reported. Given Hall *et al.*'s (2008) finding in their national survey of 7500 primary-school children, in which 92% had come to school without eating that morning, this is likely to be a widespread issue of concern. It may also be a cause of absenteeism, as absenteeism has been found to be higher among food-insecure students (Belachew *et al.*, 2011).

Importantly, **in one school, the enthusiasm and commitment of the Speed School graduates was said to have had a positive effect on the whole class, including the teacher:**

The presence of Speed School graduates impacts the class ... and my teaching in a way ... normally students' participation and interest encourages teachers to be well prepared for the lesson and to give more exercises ... and when I see students participate ... the class atmosphere is changed and I like that.

School management

School management was also a crucial factor in the quality of education provided by the Link School, particularly with regard to staff and student discipline, such as dealing with staff and student late coming and absenteeism, and student misbehaviour. The strength of the school management varied among the schools: in Teff, school management was clearly good, working together with the PSTA and KETB to address student absenteeism and dropout, as discussed earlier, and ensuring teachers were in class teaching (see Section 5.4, *Community support*), as well as working on teacher motivation.

Some teachers who fail to show commitment, and have low performance in student follow-up were advised by the PSTA and the school management to improve the situation. (woreda official)

The principal was also very much in evidence on school visits, busy following the teaching-learning process and ensuring teachers were in class teaching, or on some other tasks. The principal was also instrumental in instigating Speed School facilitator/teacher experience sharing.

His morning briefings at assembly, advising students on discipline, late coming, on cooperative learning in 1–5 groupings, and other issues related to the benefits of education, were appreciated by the students:

One good thing about the school is the advice given by the principal in the morning assembly ... It is beneficial for students. (male student, Teff)

In contrast, in Arishi, whose principal was only in school on four of the seven visits, and where levels of staff and student absenteeism were high, there was little evidence of effective management going on, provoking criticism from the students:

The principal does not ask why students are out of class and doesn't supervise if teachers are present or miss class. (female student)

Various disciplinary practices in the school also had a negative impact on student learning: such as excluding a child from the classroom for up to three days:

Sometimes the teachers punish a student who disturbs by sending out of the class and might not allow into class for three days and this hurts the student's learning because they lose track of the lesson. (female student, Arishi)

The last resort for disciplinary action in Arishi, as in the other schools, following the procedure laid down in the government-produced Blue Book, was to call parents/guardians, but students pointed out that this sometimes causes dropout, which had happened to one of the Speed School graduates:

Some students, when they are told to bring their parents and when they can't, they drop out. (male student, Arishi).

It is not known whether this is a potential cause of dropout in the other schools.

Giving physical tasks was another disciplinary strategy employed in Arishi, such as digging holes to plant trees. For students who are hungry and underfed, as is often the case in poor families, this extra physical labour is likely to affect their studies.

In Hanja, few issues emerged from the interview data that relate to school management with regard to any adverse effects on student learning. Indeed the TO was full of praise for the school:

Some schools are very cooperative and support students both when they are in Speed School and in the Link School and this school [Hanja] is among them.

For example, the school lent books to facilitators; the principal and woreda school supervisor reportedly visited and encouraged Speed School facilitators. Yet, despite a number of strengths in Hanja, observations on school visits highlighted a few issues not explicitly mentioned during interviews. First, is the low follow-up of students' attendance, though management reported that some homeroom teachers were addressing the issue. One of the SHG committee members whose house is near the school commented:

Students go out from the school during break and some do not return. I ask myself is it because of the teachers... [They are not there in the school] or principals ...I do not like to see such things ... the gate is not attended. Students are free to go.

Indeed, as highlighted earlier, student attendance was low on market days or during the coffee harvest. In one of the classroom observation days, which fell on a market day, over a third of the students were absent in the observed classes.

One of the teachers also felt management should do more to reward good teachers to motivate others to do their job better.

The school management should identify and recognize teachers based on their performance and it is in this way that they can motivate teachers for better performance. (male teacher)

Class size, which sometimes exceeded 80, was brought up as an issue by one teacher, who thought it should be the concern of the school management. They also mentioned that although efforts were being made in this direction, special attention should be given addressing issues affecting female students, such as early marriage and domestic chores.

5.6 GGE Link School support

As mentioned in Chapter 3, we included no research question that addressed the effectiveness of the Link School support programme because during the initial research scoping visit, we were given to understand that this strand of the programme had been abandoned. However, subsequent interviews with IP and GGE staff indicate that it is still operating to some extent in some schools, though respondents all agreed that it is the least successful of the four core components of the Speed School programme. Yet, **achieving improvements in quality in Link School teaching and learning is critical to the sustainability and ultimate success of GGE's Speed School programme**, as the revised Quality Standards Guide (GGE, 2016) emphasises.

We are trying as much as possible to influence the primary schools' teaching and learning process and that's another successful result. (GGE respondent)

We've not had much success with bringing quality changes to schools. (GGE respondent)

According to one GGE respondent, the two strategies for the primary school capacity development were:

- To train the Link School teachers to teach in a more interactive, participatory way;
- To help prevent dropout from the Link School by: developing an early warning system (providing schools with a manual), which would enable schools to identify students in danger of dropout – noting absenteeism and poor performance; facilitating the establishment of IGAs such as a school café or vegetable garden, to help support the most economically vulnerable students.

The first strategy involves training the principals on a five-day course, providing them with fifteen classroom strategies to make their teaching more effective, which they are to discuss with the teachers on a weekly basis prior to teachers' implementing them in class. For the first two years, refreshments were provided for the teacher discussions about pedagogy; but once the refreshments budget was cut, teachers were said to have been less enthusiastic about participating:

It works – but sometimes teachers prefer to have more leisure time. (GGE respondent)

Another GGE respondent admitted that the strategy was working in some places and not in others depending on the strength of the IP and the relevant government officers in that area. However, given that our research evidence indicates that many teachers struggle to fulfil their contractual teaching obligations by turning up to school on time every day, and teaching their subject for the full 40-minute periods, it would seem highly optimistic that they will participate regularly in voluntary discussions about pedagogy without some kind of incentive, and without it being integrated more holistically into a CPD plan for the school, and supported by the woreda school supervisor and the woreda education office more generally.

Indeed, a more systemic, integrated approach was suggested by one of the GGE staff when asked what they would change in the programme if they had an unlimited budget:

If I had [an] ample amount of money, I would organise formal trainings for the schools because unless we influence the mainstream what we do here is very small. ... I would do these trainings very seriously in a very organised and very institutional way so that the primary school teaching learning method is influenced and this interactive method is adopted in the primary school. ...

Influencing mainstream state schooling, the respondent suggested, would be achieved both by training the teachers and working closely with the government education sector and trying to influence their policy and practice.

Among the case-study schools, it was only in Hanja that the principal mentioned that the Link School capacity building was taking place. They had been given funds to provide tea and coffee for fortnightly discussions on pedagogy taken from the Speed School manual. The principal reported that the

teachers were initially unhappy that the money had not been given to them as a per diem since it was an NGO project, but that they came round once they understood the objective of the Speed School programme.

In Teff too, a knock-on effect from the Speed School, in terms of pedagogy, was reported, as facilitators were invited to share ideas with the lower grade teachers:

ALFA has an impact on the Link School ...teachers from our school [Link School] take ALFA teaching methods as a model... and ALFA facilitators are also invited to share the pedagogy with teachers who teach in Grades 1–4. (school manager, Teff)

The respondent went on to say:

It influences our school; it is new in terms of teaching aid usage ... the ALFA facilitators support our teachers in lower grades and our teachers also go and take experiences from ALFA.

When one facilitator is working in the Link School, another facilitator covers the class, as happens when one of the facilitators is absent for any other reason.

5.7 Tracking of students

The annual tracking of Speed School graduates in Link Schools faces a number of challenges. Though three of the schools provided enrolment data on the number of Speed School graduates and their grades for 2015/2016, they could not provide figures for all the years they had been a Link School, and in the fourth school, which had no official Speed School data, the facilitator, interpreter and a teacher had to go round each class to try and identify the graduates. Moreover, there were internal inconsistencies within some of the EMIS data from the case studies – for example between enrolment, repetition, re-admittance and dropout data. This raises questions about some schools' ability to furnish the IPs with accurate enrolment data when the annual tracking data are collected. GGE staff also recognise the difficulty of accessing data from some schools once principals are no longer given a financial incentive to provide the data. A further disadvantage lies in the fact that since data is gathered in October, the figures do not capture graduates who drop out later in the year. In addition, attendance data are likely to be even more unreliable, for the reasons outlined earlier in the chapter.

5.8 Conclusion

It is clear from interview data across respondents that across the case-study sites **the Speed School programme has had an extremely positive impact on student learning experiences, which has enabled many students to successfully transition or return to the government school system.** Once in the Link School, many seem able to sustain their motivation to learn, often in challenging circumstances, and excel academically, relative to their peers, even as they are critical of many aspects of their schooling. The study's findings show that in Link Schools students often get a very limited amount of contact time with teachers in class, and the quality of teaching/learning is often poor. The fact that some Speed School graduates manage to maintain a high ranking in class despite irregular attendance would seem to provide further evidence in this regard. However, it also raises the question of whether Speed School graduates are continuing to make progress in their learning, or whether their learning is stagnating, even as they remain "ahead of the pack" by virtue of their earlier Speed School grounding. The second round of testing of Speed School graduates in the survey should provide more insights on this.

The fact that some students from poor backgrounds who had previously dropped out of school are now persisting in the Link School suggests that **poverty interacts with other factors**, such as student performance, and perceived benefit of schooling, **in determining whether a student will remain in school.**

There is also a **small amount of evidence of the Speed School programme's potential to have a broader influence in school**, through the positive effect on the classroom environment of having

motivated, active Speed School students in class, and through the school hosting Speed School classes and therefore having close contact with alternative pedagogies.

The Speed School graduates and other respondents reported the **following features of Speed School stand out as being instrumental in achieving a solid foundation for learning:**

- Facilitator professionalism in terms of regular attendance, punctuality and care for the individual;
- Strict but encouraging facilitator-student relations;
- Multi-lingual teaching, using some Amharic and English, but above all, the local language to ensure all students understand;
- Learning the whole day – though this was also said to put off some parents/guardians from allowing their child to attend in the first place;
- Constant repetition and frequent revision until all understand;
- Participatory, interactive teaching methodology, involving practical activities, visual aids, group and pair work, songs, craft work;
- Focus on study skills and reading skills;
- Student encouragement, boosting their self-confidence and motivation with regard to their learning.

In terms of transition to the Link School, **some Speed School graduates experienced no difficulties in making the transition; others had some difficulties adjusting to life in the Link School**, such as the large classes, the shorter school day, constant note-taking, classroom disturbances by late-coming students, teasing by other students. **Most of these difficulties were said to be short-lived.**

The ability of Speed School graduates (and other students) to persist in school and continue to make academic progress primarily depended on the family's ability to continue to support the student's schooling financially, and on the quality of schooling available. The income-generating opportunities available were also a factor, especially for boys, whereas **early marriage and fear of abduction** was said to affect girls. **Peer pressure to earn money** was also cited as an issue, and **ill-health** of either the student or other family members **and hunger** were other factors affecting students' ability to persist in and do well at school. Some respondents were of the view that dropout was lower among Speed School graduates. This in turn may be due to the virtuous cycle of students attaining well on account of their Speed School grounding, thereby enabling them and motivating them to study more effectively, which in turn helps them to continue to attain well; however, in some cases the comparatively better social circumstances some Speed School graduates enjoyed may also play a role.

As regards the quality of schooling, the case-study reports illustrate how conditions were different across the schools. However, **in all case-study sites conditions for effective learning were challenging to various degrees.** In broad terms, following the conceptual model articulated in Chapter 3, where the interaction between school, community and local government was strongest – in Teff – conditions for graduates to remain in school and continue to learn were more favourable.

More specifically, **the quality of schooling depended on the school context, available resources, the quality of school leadership and management, levels of support offered by the community and the woreda/kebele, and their interaction with school management; teacher commitment and pedagogy; teacher supervision and support; and class size.** Though not covered in this study, nor mentioned by respondents, it is nevertheless likely that the quality of support that teachers receive in their teaching from school management and school supervisors also has a significant bearing on teachers' ability to teach effectively. The Federal Ministry of Education recognises that in many cases school leadership needs strengthening (FMoE, 2010), as principals often focus more on administrative matters and smooth relations with the woreda (Abede and Woldehanna, 2013).

Although student interviews and classroom observations confirmed that a few individual teachers engaged in partially participatory and/or interactive lessons and used some effective pedagogy, on the whole most did not, echoing findings from other observational studies (see Asgedom *et al.*, 2006; Frost and Little, 2014). **Speed School graduates' continued progress, and therefore their incentive to remain in the Link School, was being threatened** by the following features of Link Schools, which occurred to differing degrees across the case-study sites, and more generally across the woredas:

- Widespread teacher absenteeism and late coming;
- Inadequate resources, including textbooks;
- A generally unstimulating classroom environment;
- Lack of commitment among some teachers;
- Poor curriculum coverage (as a result of fewer classes being held);
- Ineffective pedagogy, including insufficient use of the local language, inadequate explanations and a lack of revision;
- Student late coming and absenteeism, causing class disturbances;
- Class disturbances by other students when teachers were absent;
- Limited access to the library and/or insufficient library books;
- Some disciplinary practices;
- High teacher turnover in one school;

At the same time, it is worth repeating that two of the case-study schools were among the better schools in their respective areas: Teff was one of the highest-attaining schools in the woreda; Hetto was under consideration for becoming a model school. Thus, **the situation in more remote rural schools** – even more remote than Arishi, where the teaching and learning circumstances were the least favourable – **is likely to be even more challenging for students.**

Similarly, **although Speed School graduates generally seemed to be doing better academically than other students**, according to a range of interview respondents, **this may not mean that they are making as much progress as they could be making.** As mentioned earlier, the results of the re-tests of the 2011/2012 Speed School graduates in the longitudinal survey should give us a better idea of the graduates' actual progress in the Link Schools. In the meantime, ***the findings of this qualitative study suggest that in some schools (and within schools, in some classes), Speed School graduates have struggled to build on the gains in learning they made in the Speed School, and they are not fully satisfied with the education they are currently experiencing.***

Furthermore, we should emphasise that most of the students interviewed were said to be relatively high-attaining – the lower attaining Speed School students referred to by one of the principals may have very different experiences to share. The relatively high attainment of the Speed School graduate interviewees may be at least partly attributable to the fact that many were not from the intended target group: ultra-poor students who had either never attended school (and were overage), or who had dropped out of school. Their continued success, therefore, may not be typical of other Speed School graduates who are from the intended target group, although woreda, kebele and school respondents suggest that Speed School graduates' academic success is more widespread.

Either way, it is clear **that for some Speed School graduates – as well as their peers and siblings – the quality of schooling available in some Link Schools is likely to have a negative influence on their desire to persist in school and on their ability to continue to make progress with their learning.** To this end, **it is vital to strengthen the capacity building element of the GGE Speed School programme.** The promising collaboration, peer observation, and skills sharing between Speed School facilitators and Link School teachers in Hanja, for example, is the kind of strategy that could be further developed and supported by GGE working in conjunction with communities and government at kebele and

woreda-level. Full involvement of newly trained Link School teachers who were previously facilitators would also be a productive strategy.

Other more specific recommendations are made in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this report we have presented the findings of two interlinked qualitative studies: the first concerns the Speed School graduates' experiences in both Geneva Global Ethiopia Speed Schools and in the government Link Schools, and factors that affect students' attendance, retention and learning outcomes in the latter; and the second relates to the operationalization of the SHGs – whose aim is to help support the schooling of the Speed School graduates once in the Link School – and explores the links between mothers' participation in SHGs and children's participation in schooling. In terms of the Speed School programme, we have been primarily concerned with the implications for the Link School capacity development programme and the mothers' SHGs.

In this final chapter, we first make some general points about the processes of the research, before addressing some of the key issues of the research, synthesising the conclusions from the Speed School graduate and SHG studies, and making recommendations.

It is worth stating at this point that many of the issues encountered in the research at the school-level such as lack of reliable statistics, widespread teacher absenteeism and late coming, shortage of textbooks, high teacher turnover, difficulties with the medium of instruction, are not unique to Ethiopia, but problems common to many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere in the Global South, especially in rural areas (see UNESCO, 2005).

At the same time as noting the commonalities affecting state schooling that Ethiopia shares with other countries, we should caution about generalising within Ethiopia. Although the research was restricted to the one region – SNNPR – the case studies have amply illustrated that even within one region there is contextual diversity, which was particularly apparent between the three Sidama sites and the Silte site, which affects the programme's operation and success in different ways. It is likely, therefore, both *across* and *within* the regions of Amhara, Tigray and Oromia, there will be similar contextual variation, which will have an impact on how the programme operates in practice in the different locations; these contextual differences need to be taken into consideration when approaching how the programme should operate, or be monitored and evaluated, in any given location. In this respect, use of ethnographic, qualitative data is vital since they can offer insights that large-scale survey data can not.

Processes of the research

As emphasised earlier in this report, this has been a collaborative endeavour in terms of the processes of design, data collection, analysis and writing between the Centre for International Education at the University of Sussex, and the Centre for Policy and Development Research at Hawassa University, with the School of Education and Training as well as with substantial support from senior staff at the Geneva Global Ethiopia office. Thus, in addition to the multiple perspectives gathered from the various stakeholders on the research issues, we have negotiated the different researcher perspectives on all aspects of the research. This has entailed lengthy face-to-face discussions, toing and froing in e-mails and Skyping across time zones. These time-consuming exchanges have been essential to producing a richer, more in-depth piece of qualitative research.

Changes within GGE

It is important to reiterate a point made in Chapter 1, namely that during the one-year research period, major changes occurred within GGE. In particular, a new director and an enlarged cadre of POs were put in place. It was clear from some of the interviews with senior GGE staff, which were held towards the end of the research period, that changes are already underway, and some of the issues highlighted in this study are already beginning to be addressed. This should be borne in mind when considering this report.

6.2 Programme achievements

The interview data presented in Chapter 5 strongly suggest that **many Speed School graduates** in the case-study sites, and more generally across the study woredas, **are still persisting in the Link Schools, participating well both in class** (where given the opportunity) **and attaining well in tests**, though reliable performance data were not available to give further weight to these assertions. Some students have clearly acquired study skills in Speed School, enabling them to study even when support is lacking in the Link School. They have also learned how to facilitate collaborative peer learning, and have acquired the self-confidence through the Speed School programme to become leaders among their peers.

The fact that some students from poor backgrounds are persisting in school, whereas previously they had dropped out, suggests that **academic success in school is likely to be an important factor in student retention**; conversely, it suggests that poverty alone may not necessarily explain student dropout.

The success of Speed Schools has also helped focus the spotlight on the value of schooling in communities where the programme is taking place.

Some senior GGE staff and woreda officials suggest that the programme has encouraged a change of attitude towards education among community members, and mothers in particular, although **experiences related by the focus SHG mothers and Speed School graduates**, described in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively, **indicate that many already had a positive attitude towards education**. Thus, although part of the rationale for the inclusion of SHGs in the Speed School programme was that SHG participation should act as a carrot to encourage mothers to keep their child in Speed School, the reverse was true for many: the schooling of the child was valued more, so that even when the SHGs were not functioning well, or mothers were struggling to attend meetings, they persisted for the sake of their child's schooling. At the same time, this finding might partly be due to the fact that many of the Speed School graduate and SHG interviewees were not from the intended target group – i.e. not the very poorest and most vulnerable, and not necessarily students who had either dropped out of school, or never attended school prior to joining Speed School. That said, poverty is a relative term and though some of the programme's beneficiaries might not have been the "poorest of the poor" when compared with other members of the community, they would probably still be categorised as poor, however the term might be defined.

There is also **a small amount of evidence of the Speed School programme's potential to have a broader influence on school pedagogy**, through the positive effect on the classroom environment of having motivated, active Speed School students in class, and through the school hosting Speed School classes and therefore having close contact with a more interactive pedagogy. The **potential for Speed School/Link School synergy** in terms of influencing Link School pedagogy is an area that needs further development through the Link School capacity building programme.

In accordance with the conceptual model presented in Chapter 3, the conditions conducive for sustained access to quality education were most apparent **in Teff**, where **there was greater evidence of schools, communities and local government** (at both kebele and woreda level) **working together to ensure students stayed enrolled in school, attended regularly and that teaching and learning was going on in class**. There was also evidence of the school trying to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, drawing on facilitator experience and Speed School pedagogy.

Although the study indicates that most of the SHGs in the case-study sites have largely failed to sustain themselves beyond the initial Speed School year, except in Teff, **some small-group successes among the SHGs have been reported more broadly in the woredas**, though these assertions should be

treated with caution without more concrete evidence. In addition, **some individual women have reportedly continued to trade.**

However, even where groups collapsed and/or investments failed, **some mothers reported spending their share of the seed money and/or money received from the original investment on school books and clothing for their children**, though clearly this is a one-off support for the child's education, and will not sustain them throughout their remaining primary school years unless alternative sources of income are available.

Other social benefits of SHG involvement found by the research include improved social cohesion and social support, especially regarding their children's schooling, and some women's increased self-confidence in saving and their involvement in business even when the enterprise failed. SHGs have also reportedly improved social cohesion: in South Omo, according to one senior GGE respondent, where social segregation was practised, mothers now sit and talk together. These social benefits resonate with findings from other studies on SHGs, reported in Chapter 2 (e.g. Odell, 2011; Deko *et al.*, 2014).

6.3 Threats to programme sustainability: key issues

Aims & objectives

The programme would benefit from more consistently articulated evidence-based and achievable aims, outcome objectives and timelines with regard to the SHGs and the Link School support programme. These would also include guidelines on the programme phase-out and the process of handing over responsibility to government.

As explained in Chapter 4, more achievable goals and job descriptions would enable IP employees to carry out their jobs more effectively. They would also facilitate M&E (see below), which could help inform programme development and improve accountability.

Selection

A further threat lies in the potential for the programme to be hijacked by the village elites as the programme's reputation for high quality education has made it a desirable alternative to public schooling, especially as it manages three years of schooling in one. Data both from the study of Speed School graduates and of the SHGs indicate a lack of transparency in the selection process. However, since the backing and involvement of kebele officials is also crucial to the success of the programme, there may need to be a degree of trade-off between accepting that a certain number of Speed School places may be taken by children who would otherwise not be eligible, in return for longer-term and broader benefits to the programme.

Training and support

Continuous training and support is another key area to be strengthened, both for the SHGs and for the Link School teachers to ensure sustainability. With regard to the latter, support should draw on Speed School pedagogy, especially where schools host Speed School classes, and make full use of former facilitators who are now trained government school teachers. For both strands of the programme, initial training sessions, be it of committee members (for the SHGs), or principals (for the school capacity building programme) need to be complemented by continual support and training by properly qualified and trained IP personnel, who in turn will need adequate support from GGE. Action research is one possible mode of CPD to explore.

M&E

Findings from both the Speed School graduates' experiences in Link Schools and the SHG research indicate **the need for more robust M&E across the board.** Systematic monitoring and evaluation should be given greater priority and be integrated through all areas of programme activity. The recent appointment of an M&E specialist PO in the GGE office in Addis is an important step in this regard.

M&E also needs to include **more independent monitoring**. At the moment, GGE relies heavily on self-report data, such as the quarterly reports from IPs, which in turn rely heavily on data provided by schools, even as GGE staff recognise that some schools are reluctant to provide data once they no longer receive a monetary incentive. The quality of the reports, one GGE respondent summarised as:

Not bad, not that good – there's room for improvement. ... There are discrepancies in some of the figures when you trace them back.

Both IPS and schools have a vested interest in presenting a positive picture since funding (be it from GGE or government) is at least partly dependent on student numbers. In addition, just as some teachers admitted to massaging the classroom attendance figures – as reported in Chapter 5 – because they thought low numbers of students might reflect badly on them, IPs and school management might feel that reporting high numbers of dropouts, or poor student attendance figures, reflects badly on them. One GGE respondent recognised the need to create an awareness among IP staff of the value of gathering accurate data and an understanding of its usefulness:

They [data collectors] have to understand that what they do is valued for what they get.

M&E strategies also need to focus more on quality, not only quantity; it is not enough to know that facilitators received 'x' days of refresher training; we need to know whether it was of adequate quality. This entails greater observation of training delivered by the IPs, and evaluations of IP training and support should be incorporated into regular review meetings, such as the one instituted this last year with IPs, which can feed into programme improvement and staff development. **Qualitative data from a small sample should be gathered** on all aspects of the programme, which can then be used to interrogate the results of large M&E survey data, and may offer possible explanations for particular programme outcomes.

These increased M&E responsibilities have implications for the POs' workload. GGE staff estimate that they currently sample around a quarter to one third of the sites to see whether the figures on the ground match those reported by the schools/IPs. If, as suggested here, their remit expands to include monitoring and increased support of IP training, for both SHGs and the Link School capacity building programme, a further expansion of GGE would be desirable, – especially given the geographical spread of the schools, the long travel time, the difficulty of verifying figures and the fact that POs are responsible for all aspects of the programme.

Tracking and reliable data

Accurate tracking of Speed School graduates is dependent on accurate enrolment and, more importantly, attendance data being provided at the school level. This, our research indicates does not always happen, especially with regard to attendance data, due to the reasons outlined in Chapter 5. **The paucity of accurate data may impede schools, IPs and GGE from identifying students who are at risk of dropping out.**

Educational quality in the Link Schools

The evidence from this research is that **many in-school factors do not support sustained access and/or meaningful learning in the government Link Schools.** As reported in Chapter 5, these include an unfavourable physical learning environment, lack of or limited access to resources, widespread teacher and student absenteeism and late coming, high teacher turnover, inappropriate disciplinary practices, ineffective pedagogy and insufficient teacher support. For Speed School graduates to sustain their motivation to remain in school and continue to build on the Speed School foundation and make progress with their learning, especially where income-earning opportunities are available, **many aspects of schooling need to be improved.** To reiterate the conceptual framework articulated in Chapter 3, sustained access to high quality teaching and learning depends on the interaction between schools, communities and local government. Therefore, **strengthening the Link School capacity**

building programme, in collaboration with government and communities, will be critical to achieving this improvement.

Financial support for children's schooling

Even where students wanted to persist in school, **there was evidence of some families being unable to pay for the direct and/or indirect costs of schooling, thereby forcing students to drop out, or making them vulnerable to dropout in the future.** The study's findings indicate that SHGs may not provide the income levels expected that would be able to support the most economically vulnerable students. This, in part, is due to the many operational challenges on the ground – as outlined in Chapter 4 – but also because the SHG programme, in its current form, does not take into account the opportunity costs of schooling and the dynamics of intra-household financial decision-making.

Other out-of-school factors

Other out-of-school factors were identified as potentially impeding the retention and learning of Speed School graduates and the non-enrolment of other children. Many are likely to be related to poverty to some degree, such as hunger, ill-health, the availability of income-earning opportunities, migration, or the need to undertake household chores or contribute to family labour. Some, however, related to peer pressure, real or imagined dangers associated with schooling (such as abduction), or attitudes towards formal schooling. These last two especially affected girls. However, while poverty is clearly central to decisions about schooling, our research suggests that even among poor families, the financial costs may be weighed against the quality, and/or perceived quality, of education available and its perceived rewards. Improving school quality, therefore, is likely to help minimise the negative impact of some of these family- and community-based factors, as will open discussion with parents/guardians and communities on these issues.

Phase-out and government involvement

A lack of a mutually agreed, planned and budgeted phase-out of the programme with government could also undermine the programme's lasting impact. The extent to which woreda and kebele officials are able and willing to continue supporting the SHGs and the Link Schools after the IPs withdraw their support is critical to sustained programme success. For this reason, as the revised 2016 Speed School Quality Guide emphasises, **deeper engagement with government is needed**, especially with regard to the Link School capacity development strand of the Speed School programme, which may also entail providing support to government in locations where government capacity is not as strong as might be desirable. However, without attempting to embed Speed School methodology and help improve teacher professionalism and motivation within the state system, the sustainability of GGE's undoubted successes in Speed Schools will remain under threat. As one GGE respondent reflected:

After all, we are here not to substitute government, not to substitute what government is doing. ... We are complementing what government is doing. ... We are successful when we are scaled up to the bigger education system, not by its own [by ourselves]. So we have to work very hard to scale up this programme to the bigger mainstream.

6.4 Recommendations

We make the following recommendations regarding the SHG and Link School capacity-building programmes, in the knowledge that GGE is already considering or even beginning to implement some of these and others to improve the programme.

The recommendations respond to research questions 5 and 12

RQ 5 What improvements could be made to help SHGs operate more effectively to

a) generate income for poor households and

b) provide increased financial support for children's schooling?

RQ 14 What improvements could be made to the Speed School Programme to ensure graduates' retention and continued progress in Link Schools?

General issues

- For both SHG and Link School improvement programmes there should be **flexible programme designs** that take into account contextual differences among regions and woredas.
- GGE should continue to hold regular meetings with IPs (such as the one initiated in 2015/2016) to aid programme improvement.
- Written guidelines need to be produced by GGE to guide all parties towards **more achievable aims, outcome objectives, responsibilities, job descriptions and timelines**, against which performance of IPs and SHGs can be measured. These need to dovetail with the new M&E criteria being developed by GGE.
- **Regular, systematic M&E of the SHGs and Link School support programme** needs to be fully integrated into the programme and carried out by POs, in addition to the ongoing monitoring by the IPs. It should also include **some independent monitoring, which focuses on the quality and not just the quantity of deliverables** (e.g. training sessions), and includes some interviews with participants. This would require additional funding.
- Geneva Global should **consider increasing the number of POs** – perhaps appointing region-specific POs, in addition to the new M&E and SHG specialists, to enable them to dedicate more time to monitoring the quality of training and support offered by IPs and school principals, to SHGs and school teachers, offering support themselves where necessary.
- **Both SHGs and Speed School graduates should be tracked after the initial year**, which would need to be budgeted for and included in the M&E strategy. Ways of independently verifying data provided by schools/groups or IPs need to be devised since inaccurate data may impede schools, IPs and GGE from identifying students who are at risk of dropping out.
- As the revised 2016 Speed School Quality Guide and senior GGE staff emphasised, **deeper engagement with government is required** so that a planned, formalised, timetabled phase-out for both the SHG and Link School capacity development programmes can be negotiated with relevant government departments, including signed (memorandum of understanding) MOUs, to ensure sustainability.

More specific recommendations are made under two possible scenarios: one assuming that the SHG programme is continued; and another that assumes that funds and energies are diverted elsewhere, particularly towards the Link School capacity development programme.

Scenario A: Continuing with the SHG programme

There is strong evidence across the case-study sites and the focus woredas, more generally, to suggest that major changes need to be made to the SHG programme for it to function more effectively, which would have have major budgetary implications.

- The **SHGs should be supported by GGE for at least one year after the Speed School year**, preferably longer, and SHGs should be tracked in terms of membership, inputs, investments, savings and expenditures.
- **Improved communication** is needed between the IP and the SHGs to ensure that the groups are aware of exactly what support they are entitled to, when, for how long, and who is to give it, to minimise misunderstandings.
- **Specialised CMs** with experience in SHGs and MF should be appointed and provided with the relevant **specialised training** (including regular CPD) by GGE – outsourced if necessary – to enable them to support the SHGs fully. These specialised CMs should be under the direction of the new SHG coordinator in GGE.

- GGE should also consider appointing **regional SHG coordinators**, who would work with the GGE SHG coordinator and the GGE staff member in charge of M&E as well as with the IPs with respect to the SHG CMs.
- **SHG CMs need to be allocated a manageable number of SHGs** to work with and adequate transport, taking into account the geographical area to be covered and the nature of the terrain.
- **All SHG members**, not just the committee members, **need intensive and regular support at all stages**, which should include some specific needs-based skills training on saving, book-keeping, budgeting etc., which would be negotiated in consultation with the SHGs themselves.
- **Training of all SHG members** is necessary, not only to enable all mothers to benefit equally from the programme, but also to help minimise any antagonism between committee and ordinary members; rotating the office bearers might also help in this regard.
- **Kebele-level or alternative cluster meetings should be convened** once the groups have been formed **at the beginning of the year, including relevant woreda officials**, to ensure all parties are aware of their various roles, responsibilities, timelines and expected outcomes and to affirm mutual commitment to the project.
- **Greater involvement of woreda officials, the Link School principal and the facilitator, as well as religious leaders, is recommended in the selection process** to make it more transparent and fair. The IPs need to ensure, as far as possible, that the CMC does not include underage children, second Speed School children in families, children of school and kebele officials, and children that have transferred directly out of the Link School.
- Relevant **woreda/kebele officers should also be involved in SHG training** sessions where appropriate, with prior agreement on budgeting.
- **More flexibility is needed in SHG formation** – allowing for smaller groups, preferably from the same gott/village, which, we gather is now happening in some areas. For example, with several Speed School sites (classes) in one school, or within the kebele, mothers could group across sites according to their gott/village.
- The **SHGs should decide whether to have payment in cash or in kind**, such as in livestock, cereals or coffee; although the decision as to what form it should take should ultimately be made by the SHGs, IPs should advise where necessary.
- Election of officers, agreement on meetings, savings, regulations and an agreed business idea approved by the CM and lodged with the IP should all be completed before any payment is made. The group should also have made some savings.
- That said, efforts should be made to ensure the SHGs can access the seed money at a time of year that allows the groups to benefit from low prices.
- Systems will need to be put in place that **address any extra child or animal care arrangements** (such as group childcare) arising from mothers' participation in SHGs that could result in other children assuming extra burdens of work.
- GGE should consider **making the seed money payment through the IP**, thereby avoiding the delays with the MFI, though an account would still be opened with the MFI in which to deposit SHG savings, and subsequent profit from the businesses.
- SHGs should have both **group and individual accounts books** that can be cross-checked to help resolve trust issues between committee and ordinary members.
- Group saving could lead to group or individual investment with appropriate support.
- **SHG travel expenses and lunch need to be budgeted for**; while it may be neither desirable or feasible to give per diems to SHG members to attend training, or to travel to the woreda town to withdraw money, it is unrealistic to expect very poor women to pay for transport costs out of their savings.

Scenario B: Alternatives to SHGs

For Speed School graduates from very poor backgrounds to be able to persist in the Link School they need continued economic support, either from the profits of more effective SHGs, or from other sources, which would need to cover both the opportunity and direct costs of schooling and take into account household financial decision-making processes.

- **UCTs or CCTs could play a part** in this.
- Profits from the Link School's IGAs could be directed towards providing lunch and/or learning materials for the most needy students, as is being practised in one of the case-study Link Schools.
- **GGE needs to work together with schools, woreda officials and local-level organisations**, such as the PSTA and KETB, and parents/guardians **on a whole-school approach to help improve the quality of education in the Link Schools**.
- Specifically, GGE, IPs and woreda officials should work together to **develop a long-term, ongoing teacher development programme** that builds on collaboration and skills sharing between Speed Schools and Link Schools – through action research, peer observation (as in the Silti school) and idea-sharing, for example – with regular, intensive inputs from IPs, overseen by GGE POs.
- Full **use should be made of former facilitators** who are now government teachers because they come with training and experience of Speed School pedagogy. They can help strengthen the quality of teaching and learning in the Link Schools.
- **Greater involvement of the PSTA and KETB** is desirable to monitor and address teacher professionalism and student attendance.
- Initial **training and support need to be provided to school principals, vice-principals and school supervisors** to enable them to support teachers in implementing aspects of Speed School pedagogy in the classroom. This could be done by GGE POs, perhaps in collaboration with teacher education colleges or university education departments.
- School principals, vice-principals and teachers would need **long-term incentives** agreed on by government (e.g. links to further training/certification and or promotion) **to encourage participation** in this school-based development.

Whichever scenario is chosen, ***unless the quality of government schooling improves, gains made in the Speed Schools are likely to be lost in the long-term.*** In this regard, strengthening the Link School capacity development programme would seem to be crucial.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX IA LIST OF INSTRUMENTS

Number	Instrument title
OBS1	Observation schedule for woreda-level trainings
OBS2	Observation schedules for SHG meetings
OBS3	Observation schedule for school visits
OBS4	Observation schedule for lessons
INT1	Group interview schedule for SHG groups
INT2	Individual interview schedule for SHG members
INT3	Group interview schedule for ALFA graduates in school
INT4	Individual interview schedule for ALFA graduates in school
INT5	Individual interview for out-of-school ALFA graduates (dropouts)
INT6	Interview schedule for school principal/vice principal
INT7	Interview schedule for teacher
INT8	Interview schedule for IP training officer (TO)
INT9	Interview schedule for IP community mobiliser (CM)
INT10	Interview schedule for ALFA facilitator
INT11	Interview schedule for woreda school supervisor
INT12	Interview schedule for woreda/kebele micro-finance officer
INT13	Interview schedule for woreda/kebele women's affairs officer
INT14	Interview schedule for PSTA committee member
INT15	Interview schedule for kebele elder/community leader on KEBT
INT16	Interview schedule for GGE management
INT17	Interview schedule for GGE M&E
INT18	Interview schedule for SHG coordinator
DOC1	List of documents to be collected/viewed
DOC2	School & community profile
DOC3	SHG basic information sheet
DOC4	School statistics sheet
ANALYSIS1	Interview & composite school observation analysis template
ANALYSIS2	Composite classroom observation template

APPENDIX IB SHG GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introduce yourself and the project, and explain why their participation is important.
Go through issues of confidentiality, anonymity etc., including the need for interviewees to keep what is said in the interview to themselves.
Make sure they have a copy of the relevant research brief.
Ask permission to record the interview.

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
SHG ALFA year: (e.g. 2015–2016)		No of SHG groups for this year in the school:	
Numbers & roles of SHG members present: (e.g. chairperson, secretary, 2 ordinary members)		Languages used in interview: (tick ✓ relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

Note that some questions will only be relevant for some groups depending on whether they are *just starting* or have been *operating for several years*?

SELECTION/ELECTION

1. Were the children for the ALFA group or the SHG mothers **selected first** for the programme?
2. If it was the mothers, **how** were the children selected?
3. How **did you feel** when you/your child was selected for the ALFA programme?
4. [Whether for mothers or children], **who was involved** in the selection process? Was the process **fair**? Why? Why not?
5. What about the **selection of the committee** among your mothers' group? Who was involved? How was it done (*show of hands*)? Who oversaw the process? Was the process fair? Why? Why not?

WOREDA TRAINING

6. **When** was the **woreda day's training** given to committee members? (*If not at the beginning, why was it delayed?*) **Where** was it held?
7. **Who was involved**? (*from the woreda, IP, kebele?*)
8. What was the **content**? (*Who covered which topics?*)
9. How **useful** was it? Give examples.
10. How could it be **improved**?
11. How is the information **passed on** to other group members?
12. Was/is there any **follow-up training**? Give details.

MEETINGS

13. **How often** does/did the group **meet**? If not often, why?

14. **Where** and **when** are/were meetings held?
15. **What** is/was **discussed** at meetings? Who decides the agenda?
16. Are/were the **meetings useful**? If so, how? If not, why not?
17. How **regular** is/was **attendance** at meetings?
18. What are/were the **barriers to attending**?
19. What happens/ed if members **can't/couldn't attend**?

GROUP DYNAMICS

Twenty-five is a large number to have in a group

20. Are/were there ever **disagreements** in the group?
21. If so, what about?
22. How do/did you **resolve** the **disputes**?
23. Are you allowed to split into **smaller groups** or save **individually**?
24. If so, how does/did it **help**?
25. If not, what do you think of the idea?
26. What is the **ideal number** of people for a self-help group?

IP INVOLVEMENT

27. **How often** does/did the **CM** from the IP [*give name*] attend meetings? (*If not CM, anyone else?*)
28. What **role** does/did he/she play?
29. Is/Was their training/support **helpful/useful**? If so, give examples. If not, why not?
30. Does/did the CM give **enough support**? (If more is/was wanted, what?)
31. Are/were any **woreda/kebele officials** involved in **supporting** the SHG? (*Who? How? Training?*). Give examples.
32. Is/Was there **enough support** from woreda or kebele officials? If not, what more is/was wanted?

For well established SHGs ...

33. Once the ALFA year was over, did you have any **further contact** with the **CM/facilitator**?
34. Any **further contact** with **kebele** or **woreda** officials?
35. Is there any **more support** you **would have liked**? If so, what?

FINANCES

36. **How much** are/were members **saving**? Who decided the amount?
37. How are **accounts** kept? (*Individually/collectively?*)
38. Who **checks** the accounts? How often? Any problems?
39. **When** are you going to (did you) get the **seed money**?
40. What are/were the **criteria for receiving** the seed money? (*e.g. Did/do you have to save a particular sum, ensure your child attends (attended) ALFA class?*)
41. [For well established groups] Was it when you expected to get the money? If not, why not? If late, what were the consequences?
42. What do you intend to do/did you **do with the initial money**? (*Spend it individually/collectively?*) How was it decided what to spend it on?
43. What happens/ed to the **profits**? (*Individual/collective?*)

For well established SHGs ...

44. How has the group **evolved**? (*Changes in ways of working?*)

45. How much have you **saved** since you began?
46. What **investments** have been made by group members?
47. Have any **loans** been given to members? What for?
48. Has anyone in the group had difficulty **paying back the loan**? What happens?
49. What do you **spend the profits** on? (*individually? collectively? Further investment? Household expenses?*)
50. Do you know of other SHGs in the community that are no longer functioning? If so, how many? Why?
51. Have any SHG members transferred into another group? How many? Why?

CONDITIONALITY

52. What happens/ed if someone in the group **fails/ed to save**? (*Who decides/ed?*)
53. What happens/ed if your child **misses/ed ALFA class**?
54. Has anyone **dropped out** of your SHG? Why?

OTHER SAVINGS GROUPS

55. Do you participate in other **traditional savings groups**, such as *ekub*?
56. What is the **difference** between this and the SHG?
57. Has the SHG **affected your participation** in *ekub*? If so, how?
58. Have you or anyone you know participated in **another self-help/micro-finance group**?
59. If so, how does/did it compare to this programme? (*amount of money, support, conditions?*)

AND FINALLY ..

60. What **improvements** would you suggest to this **SHG programme**?

Ask who would be willing to be interviewed individually at a later time; if no ordinary group members are present, ask for contact details of an ordinary member who might be willing to be interviewed

ASK IF THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME

APPENDIX IC INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SHG MEMBER

The individual interviews should be conducted *after* you have attended *at least one* of the SHG meetings (*if they have any ...*)

Reintroduce yourself and the remind them of the research project and that their continued participation is important and appreciated.

Remind them of issues of confidentiality, anonymity etc.

Ask permission to record.

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
SHG ALFA year: (e.g. 2015–2016)		No of SHG groups for this year in the school:	
Interviewee's role: e.g. SHG chair, ordinary member; note student ID of ALFA child		Languages used in interview: (tick ✓ relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

Explain that you are going to ask them questions both about their children and education, including ALFA class, and also about the SHG as well as more general questions about family income-generation.

ALFA CLASS & SCHOOLING

1. **How old** was your child when they started attending ALFA class?
2. What **do/did** they **think** of the programme? Why?
3. What do/did they **like most** about the programme? Give examples.
4. Is/Was there anything they **don't/didn't like**?
5. What's **your view** of the ALFA programme? Give reasons.
6. Had your child been to **school before**? If so, for how long? Why did they **drop out**?
If they have/had not been to school, why not?

For SHG mothers whose child is now in a link school ... (If they have or have had more than one child in the ALFA programme get answers to the questions for each child.)

7. How did your child find the **transition/change** to life in the government/link school?
(*easy? difficult? enjoyable? not enjoyable*) Give examples.
8. Are they **still in school** now? Why? Why not?
9. If in school, what do they **like** about school?
10. What do they **not like** about school?
11. What is their **attendance** like?
12. Do they **sometimes miss** school? If so, why? Give examples.
13. How are they **performing** academically? (*tests? classroom participation?*)
14. Do you think they will **stay in school** until Grade 8? If not, why not?
15. If so, what are their **future plans** once they have finished primary school?

FAMILY & EDUCATION

16. Have **you ever been to school**? If so, what **grade** did you complete?

17. What about **your children's education**?

Complete the table below; ask for details in age order... (oldest to youngest)

Age (if known)	F/M	Never been to school	In school (If so, where? Which grade?)	Dropped out (Which grade?)	Completed Grade 8?	Reasons for not being in school (Complete after interview from the tape)

18. Ask about each child that has **not been to school** or has **dropped out of school** and ask **why**.

19. Ask about each child who is **overage** for the grade they are in. Why? (e.g. Did they start late and/or have to repeat? Dropped in and out of school?)

20. Ask about **plans** for the **children too young** to be at school. Do you **intend** to send them to school? (Where, when & why?)

HOUSEHOLD INCOME & DECISION-MAKING

21. What are the **main sources of income** in your household?

22. [If they are from older SHG groups] **How much**, if anything, do the ALFA SHG investments contribute? If not much, why not? If so, in what ways. Give examples.

23. Were you involved in **income-generating activities** before joining the SHG? If so, give examples? (e.g. trading? running a shop?)

24. What **other savings or income-generating** programmes are you involved in now?

25. **Who makes the decisions** about **how to spend money** in your household? (You alone? Or with other family members (e.g. husband)? Someone else?) Why?

26. **Who makes decisions** about **sending children to school** in your household? (You alone? Or with other family members (e.g. husband)? Someone else?) Why? What **factors** are taken into account?

SHG EXPERIENCE

27. What do/did you **like most** about being part of the ALFA programme SHG?

28. What do/did you **dislike** about it?

29. How has it affected your **financial situation**? (Has it improved? Stayed the same? Got worse?) Give details.

30. What proportion of the SHG savings have you **invested**? What in? (e.g. a goat? a grinding stone?)

31. What proportion have you **spent on** day-to-day living expenses?

32. What **specifically** have you spent the money on?

- 33. What do you intend to do **in the future**?
- 34. Have there been any **other benefits** to being part of the SHG?
- 35. Has it **affected** your **family life** in any way? If so, how?

AND FINALLY ...

Ask about anything that came out of the SHG meeting(s) you attended or the earlier group interview

...

- 36. What **ONE improvement** would you make to the ALFA school programme?
- 37. What **ONE improvement** would you make to the SHG programme?

ASK IF THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME

APPENDIX ID GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR ALFA GRADUATES

Introduce yourself and the research project, and explain why their participation is important.
Go through issues of confidentiality, anonymity etc., including the need for interviewees to keep what is said in the interview to themselves.

Make sure they each have a copy of the research brief.

Ask permission to record the interview.

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
ALFA year: e.g. 2011–12		Grade & class:	
Person(s) interviewed: e.g. female/male ALFA graduates		Languages used in interview: (tick ✓ relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

Explain that you are going to ask some questions about their ALFA class experiences and their experiences in school now.

First you're going to write down some personal details.

Subject(s) observed:		Teacher(s) observed: (initials)		
Student Initials/ID number	1.	2.	3.	4.
Age				
Gender				
Religion				
Language(s) at home				
Ethnicity				
Distance to school (or time to get to school)				

GENERAL

1. What do you **like** most about this school? Why? (i.e. *What are the best things about this school?*)
2. What do you **dislike** most about school (*this school*)? Why? (i.e. *What are the worst things about this school?*)
3. What do you think makes a **good** teacher?
4. What do you think makes a **bad** teacher?

ALFA CLASS

Do you remember when you were in the ALFA class....? *(Perhaps get them to close their eyes for a moment and think about their ALFA class ...)*

5. What did you **like most** about the ALFA classes? Why? *(Elicit as many points as possible ...)*
6. What did you **dislike most** about the ALFA classes? Why? *(Elicit as many points as possible ...)*
7. How **easy or difficult** was it for you to **learn** in the ALFA class? Why?
8. **What helped you to learn** in the classes? Give examples.
9. **What made it difficult** to learn in class? Give examples.
10. *If not covered in the above answers, ask about their opinions about more specific features of their ALFA class using words the students will understand:*
 - **classroom?** *(size? condition? seating? tables? light? chalkboard?)*
 - **resources?** *(readers? clay? paper & crayons? exercise books? writing materials? visual aids? realia?)*
 - **facilitator?** *(attendance? punctuality? discipline? prepared lessons?)*
 - **pedagogy?** *(activities? grouping? explanations? medium of instruction? peer learning? revision? classroom participation? tests or quizzes? Individual questions?)*
 - **facilitator-student relations** *(manner of treating students? discipline? favouritism?)*
 - **student-student relations** *(Did they generally get on? If not, who didn't get on with whom? Any 'teasing', bullying, fighting?)*
 - **anything else?** *(How did you cope with long days? class on Saturday? Did you get enough water and food for the whole day? Did everyone come back after lunch?)*

TRANSITION

Do you remember when you **first started class** in the government/link school after you'd finished your ALFA class....? *(Perhaps get them to close their eyes for a moment and think about their first week...keep reminding them that this is about when they first started government/link school ...)*

11. How did you **feel** when **you first went** to the government school after your ALFA class year? Why? Give examples.
12. What were the main **differences** you noticed between the ALFA school and this school when you started?
13. How **easy or difficult** was it for you to **learn** when you first started? Why? Why not?
14. How **easy or difficult** was it to **make friends** when you first started? Why? Why not?
15. When you first started, did the **teacher treat** ALFA graduates **the same** as other students? Give examples.
16. When you first started, did other **students** treat ALFA graduates **the same** as other students? Give examples.

GOVERNMENT/LINK SCHOOL

General issues: lateness, absenteeism & dropout

17. Are students ever **late** for school? Which students? *(older? younger? boys? girls? a mix?)* Why?
18. Are they **disciplined** for this? How?
19. Do you think it is **fair** to be disciplined in this way?
20. Are students sometimes **absent** for a day from school? Which students? *(older? younger? boys? girls? a mix?)* Why?
21. Do you know students who have **missed school for a term** or more? Which students? *(older? younger? boys? girls? a mix?)* Why?

22. How are they **treated by teachers and other students** when they **come back** to school? Give examples.
23. Has anyone from your ALFA class **dropped out** of school? Why?
24. Are **parents** expected to **explain student absences** to the school?

Now we're going to ask you some more specific questions about school ...

Physical environment

25. **How satisfied** are you with the **quality** and **condition** of the **school buildings**? Give examples.
26. What about the **condition of the classrooms** (*size? seating & tables? chalk board? light/windows? What about when it rains?*)

Resources

27. **How satisfied** are you with the school's **resources**? (*sufficient textbooks? Are they used in class? Used for homework? Do most/all students have exercise books and pens?*)
28. Are there **other materials in schools**? (*wall charts? pen and paper? Sports or science equipment?*) Do you get to **use** them? If not, why not?
29. Is there a **library**? (*Are there sufficient books? Do you have opportunities to use it? If not, why not?*)

Teacher professionalism

30. Are teachers ever **absent** from school/class? If so, why? How often?
31. **What happens** to your class in this case? (*Another teacher takes it? Monitors supervise study? Students go out to play?*)
32. Are teachers ever **late** for class? Why? How often?
33. How well do teachers **prepare** their classes?
34. Is your **classwork** and **homework** usually **marked**? If not, why not?
35. Do teachers **treat all students the same**? If not, give examples.

Pedagogy and learning

36. What **helps you learn** in class? Give examples (*Elicit as many as possible*)
37. What makes it **difficult** for you to learn? Give examples. (*Elicit as many as possible*)
38. What **language** do the teachers mainly teach in? What **other languages** are used?
39. Which **language** or languages do **you prefer** to learn in? Why?
40. Do all students **participate** equally in class? If not, which groups participate more? Why? Why do some not participate?
41. Do all students **perform equally in tests**? If not, which groups perform best? Why?

Teacher-student relations

42. What are **relations like** between your class and most teachers? (*e.g. Good? poor? formal? informal? friendly?*)
43. What sort of **offences** are students disciplined for? (*e.g. not doing homework, fighting, missing class*)? **How** are students **disciplined**? Is the discipline **fair**? Why/Why not?

Student relations

44. How well do **students get on together** in your class? Are there some who don't get on well? Why?
45. Is there any **teasing/bullying/fighting** in class or in the school compound?

Give examples? Who is generally involved? (*victim/perpetrator – particular social groups*)?

46. Does anyone (*teachers/monitors/other students/adults*) ever **intervene**? How?

47. Do you have **school duties**? (*e.g. cleaning, working on the farm?*) If so, what? How often? Are they the same for all students? Do you think they are **fair**?

AND FINALLY ...

Ask students about any significant observation from your class/school observations ..

48. If you have a **problem** in school, who would you tell?

49. What **ONE thing** have you learned from ALFA class that has been most useful in your study here? (*ask each group member*)

50. What **ONE aspect** of the school you are in now would you like to improve? (*ask each group member*)

Ask if any would be willing to be interviewed individually at a later date.

ASK IF THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU.

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME.

APPENDIX IE INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SPEED SCHOOL GRADUATES

Reintroduce yourself and the research project, and remind them that their continued participation is important and appreciated.

Remind them of issues of confidentiality, anonymity etc.

Ask for permission to record the interview.

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
ALFA year: e.g. 2011-12		Grade & class:	
Person interviewed: note ID number		Languages used in interview: (tick ✓ relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

Remind them that a few weeks/months ago you asked questions about their experience in both the ALFA class and the government school. Today you are going to ask them in more detail about these experiences and about their family background....

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Ask about their **sisters** and **brothers**. Are they in school or have they been to school?

Ask for details in age order (oldest first).

Age (if known)	F/M	In school (If so, where? Which grade?)	Never been to school	Completed Grade 8?	Dropped out (Which grade?)

Go one by one through the sisters and brothers that have **not been to school** or have **dropped out of school** and ask if they know why. Have any also been to ALFA class? (Put * against any that have)

BEFORE ALFA SCHOOL

Take them back to their time before ALFA class...

1. **Before** attending the ALFA class, had you been to school? If so, where? (If not, move on

to the next section)

2. **How long** did you spend in that school **before you dropped out**?
3. **Why** did you **stop attending** school at that time? *(If they only give one reason, probe for others.)*

ALFA CLASS

This section repeats some of the questions asked in the group interview. The idea is to probe more deeply and bring up any issues from their (or other) group interviews or school or classroom observations

4. **How old** were you when you were in the **ALFA class**?
5. What did you **like most** about ALFA classes? Why? *(Elicit as many points as possible ...)*
6. What did you **dislike most** about ALFA classes? Why? *(Elicit as many points as possible)*
7. How **easy or difficult** was it for you to **learn** in the ALFA class? Why?
8. **What helped you to learn** in the classes? Give examples. *(e.g. teaching methods? language? activities? ways of working in class?)*
9. **What made it difficult** to learn in class? Give examples.
10. Did you **learn** anything from the ALFA class that you find **helpful in school now**?
11. Have you **learned** anything in ALFA class that you think will be **useful in the future**? *(e.g. about particular subjects, or about yourself, other people, how to behave, treat people)*
12. What **ONE improvement** would you make to ALFA classes?

HOME SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLING

13. When you were in ALFA class, **who provided** your **learning materials** *(exercise books, pen/pencil?)*?
14. Who provided **textbooks** or **reading books**?
15. Did you have **water** and **food** during the day? If not, why not? If so, **who provided** that?

Now you are in the government school

16. **Who pays** for your pen and exercise books? If the family, is it difficult? Why? Why not?
17. Who provides **textbooks/reading books**? If the family, is it difficult? Why? Why not?
18. Do you have **water** and **food** during the day? If not, why not? If so, who provides it?
19. Are there any other **school costs**? *(e.g. contributions to the school development fund or the PSTA?)*
20. Do you get **help** with your schoolwork/homework from any of your **family**? If so, from whom? What sort of support?
21. When not at school, do you do **other work** for the family? *(domestic chores? agriculture? looking after livestock/younger siblings?)* Is it the same for other brothers and sisters?
22. Did you do **as much of this kind of work** when you were **in ALFA class**? Why/why not?
23. Do you do **other paid work**? If so, what? When?
24. Does this work *(chores, unpaid or paid work)* ever **interfere** with your school work? If so, which? How? *(attendance, latecoming? ability to do homework?)* When? *(time of day/season?)*

MOTHER'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE SHG

When you were in the ALFA class, your mother was in a mothers' self-help group ...

25. Did this **help** the **family finances**? If so, how? If not, why not?
26. Is your mother **still involved** in this group? Why? Why not?
27. Is she involved in **other SHG/micro-finance groups** or **ekub**? If so, what? If not, why not?
If so, are they helpful? How?

TRANSITION

This section and the next also repeat some of the questions asked in the group interview. The idea is to probe more deeply and bring up any issues from their (or other) group interviews, and from your school and classroom observations.

28. How did you **feel** when **you first went** to the government school after your ALFA class year? Why? Give examples.
29. What were the main **differences** you noticed between the ALFA class and this school when you started? (*positive and negative*)
30. How **easy or difficult** was it for you to **learn** when you first started? Why? Why not?
31. How **easy or difficult** was it to **make friends** when you first started? Why? Why not?
32. When you first started, did the **teacher treat** ALFA graduates **the same** as other students? Give examples.
33. When you first started, did other **students** treat ALFA graduates **the same** as other students? Give examples.

GOVERNMENT (LINK) SCHOOL

34. What do you **like best** about school now? (*in class **and** out of class*)
35. What do you **like least** about school now? (*in class **and** out of class*)
36. What **helps** you to **learn** in class?
37. What makes it **difficult to learn** in class?
38. Do you ever **struggle to attend regularly**? Do any of your **friends**? Why? Why not?
39. **How well** are you doing in your **studies** at the moment? (*understanding lessons – which subjects? homework? test scores?*)
40. Have you had to **repeat** a year? If so, why?
41. Have you thought of **dropping out** of school (*again, if they had previously*)? Why? Why not? Have some of your **friends**? If so, why?
42. If so, what **made you/them decide** to continue?
43. What is **different** about your **life now** (in school or at home), to when you dropped out previously?

AND FINALLY THE FUTURE

44. What **ONE improvement** would you like to make to this school?
45. What do you **plan to do** in the future when you finish school?

ASK IF THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU.

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME

APPENDIX IF INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR ALFA GRADUATE DROPOUTS

Introduce yourself and the project, and explain that their participation is important and appreciated.
Go through issues of confidentiality, anonymity etc.
Make sure they have a copy of the research brief.
Ask permission to record the interview.

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
ALFA year: e.g. 2011–12			
Person interviewed: e.g. ALFA dropout & ID no		Languages used in interview: (tick ✓ relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interviewee's age:		Interviewee's gender:	
Interviewee's religion:		Interviewee's ethnicity:	
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

BEFORE ALFA SCHOOL

Take them back to their time **before** ALFA class...

1. **Before** attending the ALFA class, had you been to school? If so, where?
(If not, move on to the next section)
2. **How long** did you spend in that school **before you dropped out**?
3. What **grade** were you in when you **dropped out**?
4. **Why** did you **stop attending** school at that time? (If they only give one reason, probe for others.)

ALFA CLASS

Do you remember when you were **in the ALFA class**....?

5. How **old** were you when you were in ALFA class?
6. What did you **like most** about the ALFA classes? Why? (Elicit as many points as possible ...)
7. What did you **dislike most** about them? Why? (Elicit as many points as possible)
8. How **easy or difficult** was it for you to **learn** in the ALFA class? Why?
9. **What helped you to learn** in the classes? Give examples.
10. Is there anything you **learned in ALFA class** that you think will be **useful in the future**? (e.g. about particular subjects or about yourself? other people? how to behave, treat people etc.?)
11. What **ONE thing** would you improve in ALFA classes?

TRANSITION

Do you remember when you **first started** class in the government/link school after you'd finished your ALFA class....? (Perhaps get them to close their eyes for a moment and think about their first week...keep reminding that this is about when they **first started** ...)

12. How did you **feel** when you first went to the government school after your ALFA class year? Why? Give examples.

13. What were the main **differences** you noticed between the ALFA school and this school when you started? (*positive and negative*)
14. How **easy or difficult** was it for you to **learn** when you first started? Why? Why not?
15. How **easy or difficult** was it to **make friends** when you first started? Why? Why not?
16. When you first started, did the **teacher treat** ALFA graduates **the same** as other students? Give examples.
17. When you first started, did other **students** treat ALFA graduates **the same** as other students? Give examples.

DROPPING OUT

18. What **grade** were you in when you **stopped going to school**?
19. What was the **main reason** you stopped going to school?
20. Were there **other reasons** that contributed to this decision? (*in school or out of school*)
Give examples.
21. Was your **family aware** of your decision when you left school? If not, why not?
22. Did **family** members **support or oppose** your decision? Why? Why not?
23. Was your **mother** still a member of the **self-help group** when you stopped go to school?
If not, why not?
24. Before you dropped out, were you **absent** from school?
25. If so, **how often** were you absent? (*A little? A lot?*) Why?
26. How did **teachers respond** to your absences? (*i.e. What did they do?*)
27. What were your **school test results** like? If poor, how did your teachers' respond to this?
(*i.e. What did they do?*)
28. What **would have helped** you to stay in school?
29. What is your **main occupation** now? (*i.e. How do you spend your day?*)

FAMILY & THE FUTURE

30. Have you other **brothers** or **sisters at school**? If so, which grades?
31. Have you other **brothers** or **sisters not in school**? Why are they not in school?
32. What are you doing now you are **not studying** at school?
33. Do you think you will **go back** to school **in the future**? If not, why not?
34. Would you **like to go back** to school? Why? Why not?
35. What **ONE aspect** of school would you like to improve?

ASK IF THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME

APPENDIX IG PRINCIPAL/VICE-PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The principal/vice-principal should be interviewed in one of the later visits, *after* you have observed lessons and interviewed students and teachers.

Remind them of issues of confidentiality and anonymity (for them personally, and the school).

Ask permission to record the interview.

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
Person(s) interviewed: e.g. principal or vice-principal		Languages used in interview: (tick ✓ relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

Explain that you are going to ask about the ALFA programme first and then about the school and local community.

ALFA PROGRAMME

Lead into the topic: in your school you have several ALFA classes ...

1. How **many years** has the school been **involved** in the programme?
2. What specifically has the school done to facilitate the programme? (*e.g. hosting classes, providing meeting space for the mothers' self-help groups*)
3. What has been **your involvement**?
4. Did you (or any staff members) receive any **training** or orientation for your involvement from either Geneva Global or the government? If so, what?
5. Was it **adequate**? How could it have been improved?
6. What, in your view, is the main aim of the ALFA programme?
7. What do you **know** about its teaching philosophy and methods?
8. What is **your opinion** about the ALFA programme? (*Is it a good thing/bad thing?*) Why? Give examples.
9. Has the presence of the ALFA programme had an **impact** on the school? How? Give examples. If not, why not? (*e.g. increased school numbers? Changed ways of teaching?*)

TRANSITION

10. What proportion (approximately) of the ALFA graduates **transfer** into your school after their ALFA year has ended?
11. What proportion **drop out** before the new term? Does this apply to particular social groups (*older/younger, female/male, from poorer families*)?
12. What proportion **drop out in later years**? Why? Does this apply to particular social groups (*older/younger, female/male, from poorer families*)?
13. Which **grade(s)** do most ALFA graduates transfer into?
14. **How** is it **decided** which class they should move into?
15. Are there any **differences** between ALFA graduates and other students? (*academically? socially?*) If so, what? Why?
16. How easily do ALFA graduates **adapt** to the new learning environment in the government school? Give examples.

17. **How are they treated** by the other students, students? (e.g. *Are they teased? bullied? admired?*)

18. How **do they treat** other students? Give examples.

ACCESS TO LEARNING IN GENERAL

19. Are students often **late** for school? Which social groups? Why?

20. How are **latecomers** treated? Give examples.

21. What is **student attendance** like in this school? What are the reasons?

22. Are there **particular groups** of student (*gender/ethnic/religious/age etc.*) who tend to have **poor attendance**? What are the reasons? What about **ALFA graduates**?

23. Do you have many **repeaters**? Any particular social groups? Why?

24. Do you have many **overage** students? Any particular social groups? Why?

25. Why are they **overage**? (*start school late? repeat classes? drop in and out school?*)

26. How are they **treated** by teachers/other students?

27. What is student **drop out** like in this school? What are the reasons?

28. Is **pregnancy** or **early marriage** an issue? For females and males? What happens to the mother-to-be/father-to-be if they are still in school?

29. Are **dropouts** from any **particular social groups**? Why? What about **ALFA graduates**?

30. What does the school do to **improve attendance** and **punctuality**, and **prevent drop out**?

31. What are the **main obstacles to student learning** in the classroom?

TEACHERS

Including teacher professionalism, teacher-student relations, pedagogy

32. In what ways do teachers contribute **positively** to students' learning experiences?

33. In what ways do teachers contribute **negatively** to students' learning experiences?

34. How would describe the level of **teacher professionalism** in your school? (e.g. *absenteeism, treatment of students, lesson preparation?*)

35. Do the teachers **treat** ALFA students in the **same way** as other students? Give examples. Why? Why not?

36. What do **teachers think** of the **ALFA programme**? Why?

37. Have teachers in the school been **influenced** in any way **by the ALFA classes**? If so, how? Give examples. If not, why not?

DISCIPLINE

38. Is there a **school policy** on **discipline** (*especially corporal punishment*)?

39. Is it always followed by your teachers? Give examples if not.

40. What is the **procedure** for dealing with teachers who **do not comply** with the policy on discipline?

41. Are **overage** students **disciplined** in the same way as other students? Are girls and boys?

42. How do **overage** students react to being disciplined? Do girls and boys react the same way, or differently?

PARTICIPATION & ASSESSMENT

43. Do **ALFA** students participate in the same way as other students in class? If not, how are they different?

44. Is it the **same** for female/male ALFA students? (*or female/male overage students?*)

45. How do **ALFA** students perform in **tests**? Why?

46. How do **overage** students in general perform? Why?

47. Are there any differences between **boys** and **girls**? Why?

FAMILIES

48. What kind of support do **ALFA students** get from their families? (*Ask about overage students in general if no knowledge of ALFA students*)

59. What **more** could families do to **support** their children's education?

50. What about the ALFA mothers' **self-help groups** – do they help provide financial assistance for their children's education? If so, give examples. If not, why not?

51. How many of the ALFA mothers' **self-help groups** (approximately) are **still functioning**? Why so many/few?

52. How **successful** are they? Why?

COMMUNITY/GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

53. How much **government** support does the school get? Give examples. How could it be **improved**?

54. How does the **PSTA support** the school? Give examples. How **effective** is it? How could it be **improved**?

55. How does the **KETB support** the school? Give examples. How **effective** is it? How could it be **improved**?

AND FINALLY ...

Ask the principal about any significant issues from school observations and interviews (*without compromising other respondents' anonymity/confidentiality*)

56. What would **most help** improve access to schooling for young people in the area?

57. What would **most help** you to improve the quality of education in school?

Transfer the relevant responses to the school and community profile form later (e.g. for policies on discipline).

ASK WHETHER THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME

APPENDIX IH TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Reintroduce yourself and the research project, and explain that their participation is important and appreciated.

Go through issues of confidentiality, anonymity etc.

Make sure they have a copy of the research brief.

Ask permission to record the interview.

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
Person(s) interviewed: female Grade 6 science teacher		Languages used in interview: (tick ✓ relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Class(es) observed:		Topic(s) taught:	
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

Explain that you are going to ask them for some personal details and then ask them about their teaching experiences in the school and about their thoughts on the ALFA programme.

Teaching experience: (no of years)		Age:	
Years in <i>this</i> school:		Gender:	
Pre-service training (qualifications)		Religion:	
In-service training (last 2 years)		Ethnicity:	
School subjects:			

GENERAL

1. What do you **like** most about your job?
2. What do you **dislike** most about your job?
3. What do you think makes a **good teacher**?
4. What do you think are the **biggest challenges** for this school?
5. What are the main **obstacles to student learning** in the classroom?

ALFA PROGRAMME

Lead into the topic: in your school you have several ALFA classes

6. What, in your view, is the main aim of the ALFA programme?
7. What do you **know** about its teaching philosophy and methods?
8. What is **your opinion** about the ALFA programme? (*Is it a good thing/bad thing?*)
Why? Give examples.
9. Has the presence of the ALFA programme had an **impact** on the school? How? Give examples. If not, why not?
10. Has it **affected the way you teach**? If so, how? Give examples. If not, why not?

ALFA GRADUATES

11. **How many** ALFA graduates do you have in your class?
[Ask the next question only if this is the graduates' first year after ALFA (speed) school]
12. When they first joined the class, how well did they **adapt** to the new learning environment? If not well, why? Give examples.
*[If the teacher is not aware which students are ALFA graduates, or sees no difference between them and other students, repeat the following questions with regard to **average students**]*
13. Are ALFA/speed school graduates similar to or different from other students in terms of **attendance**? Give examples. If different, ask why.
14. Are they similar to or different from other students in terms of **participation**? Give examples. If different, ask why.
15. Are they similar to or different from other students in terms of **behaviour**? Give examples. If different, ask why.
16. Are they similar to or different from other students in terms of **performance**? Give examples. If different, ask why.
17. How are they **treated by other students** in the class? Give examples.
18. Are there any **differences** between the **female and male** ALFA/speed school graduates? Give examples.
19. Are any of the ALFA graduates **often absent** from class? Why?
20. What **do you say or do** when they are often absent?
21. Have any of the ALFA graduates **dropped out** of school? Why?
22. Are the reasons similar or different for **girls and boys**? Give examples.

IN CLASS

23. **What** do you think **helps** students to learn in class?
24. *[If they did not mention teaching methods specifically]* What **teaching methods** or **activities** do you think most help students learn?
25. What do you think **prevents** some students **from learning** in class? Give examples.
26. How difficult is it to **teach in English**? Do you sometimes use Amharic and/or Sidamigna/Siltigna as well? If so, why?
27. How well do students **understand** English? What **impact** does that have on their learning?
28. How well do you think students **participate** in class? If not well, what reasons are there for low participation?
29. Do students **choose where they sit** in class? Who sits with whom? Why? Do you intervene in students **seating**. Why? Why not?
30. In what ways do you **discipline** students who misbehave? Do you discipline boys and girls in the same way?
31. Is there a **school policy** on discipline (*especially corporal punishment*)? Do you agree with it?

STUDENT-STUDENT RELATIONS

32. How do students **get on** with each other in class? In school?
33. Are there particular groups who don't get on well with each other? (*e.g. girls & boys, younger or older students?*) Why? Give examples.
34. Is there any **teasing/bullying/fighting** in class or in the school compound? What kinds of things do they do? Who is generally involved (*victim/perpetrator – particular social groups*)?
35. How do teachers generally deal with such issues?

Ask the teacher about any significant observation from your class/school observation(s)

AND FINALLY ...

36. What would most help you to improve the quality of the teaching and learning in your class?

ASK WHETHER THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU &

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME

APPENDIX AI INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR IP TRAINING OFFICER (TO)

Introduce yourself and the research project, and explain that their participation is important and appreciated.

Go through issues of confidentiality, anonymity etc.

Make sure they have a copy of the relevant research brief.

Ask permission to record the interview.

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
Person(s) interviewed: e.g. female/male TO		Languages used in interview: (tick ✓relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

Explain that you're going to ask you some general questions about their job, then more specific questions about the ALFA programme, the government link schools and the mothers' self-help groups ...

GENERAL

1. **How long** have you been working for [*name the IP*]?
2. **How long** have you been working on this **ALFA school** project? (*Always as a TO?*)
3. What did you **do before** you joined the programme?
4. What do you **like most** about this job?
5. What do you **dislike most** about this job?

JOB DESCRIPTION

6. What is **your role** within the programme?
7. What are the **main activities** of your job? (*ie. What do you do on an annual/ monthly/weekly basis? Probe about selection of ALFA students, training, monitoring CMs*)

MAIN CHALLENGES

8. What are the **main challenges/difficulties** in doing your job successfully? (*Elicit several*)
9. How can they be **overcome**?

Ask about any relevant issues arising from the IP quarterly reports to Geneva Global

ALFA CLASSES & ALFA GRADUATES

10. What are the **main reasons for the success** of the ALFA classes?
11. **Which aspects** of ALFA classes could still be **improved** on?
12. Are the **ALFA graduates monitored** once they have finished the ALFA programme?

13. If so, **how** is this done? (*visits? telephone schools? By whom?*) And how often? If not, why not? (*Probe about feasibility given the high no of schools, large area, & if the programme moves to another area*)
14. **What** specifically is **monitored**? (*enrolment? attendance? performance?*)
15. What are the **difficulties in monitoring** ALFA graduates? Give examples.
16. What **proportion** of ALFA graduates generally **stay on** in the link school until the end of the year? (*half?, most? almost all? Any differences between girls and boys? If so, why?*)
17. Do any have **difficulties adapting** to the new school environment? If so, give examples.
18. Do some students **move to another school** during the first year? Why?
19. What are the **main reasons** ALFA graduates **drop out** of link schools (*at any time*)? Are they from any particular social group? (*e.g. older/younger students, female/male? from poorer families?*)

GOVERNMENT (LINK) SCHOOLS

20. What do you think is **good** about the government link schools? Give examples.
21. What do you think **could be improved** in these link schools? Give examples.

SHGs

General

22. What are the **requirements** that the SHGs have to fulfil for Geneva Global? (*saving? meetings – how often? child's attendance at ALFA classes? anything else?*)
23. Who has **overall responsibility** for **monitoring** the SHGs during the ALFA year? How do they do this? (*Is anyone else involved? Does it vary according to kebele?*)
24. How **successful** do you think the SHG programme has been so far? Give examples.
25. What are the **main problems/difficulties**? Give examples. (*Prompt with examples from SHG interviews if necessary*)
26. How could the programme be **improved**?

Training & support

27. When is the **woreda-level training** for office bearers usually held?
28. **Who** is involved? **What** do they do?
29. How **useful** is it? How could it be **improved**?
30. Is there any **follow-up support/training** given? If so, what? By whom?
31. **Who else** is involved in **supporting** the SHGs? (*e.g. kebele or woreda officials?*) If so, what do they do?

Finances

32. How much do groups usually **save** per month? Who decides?
33. What happens if mothers **can't make the payments**?
34. **When** do the SHGs get the **seed/start-up money** (*Probe about late payment and reasons why? Probe about contradictions with SHG accounts*)
35. What do SHGs **invest their money** in? Give examples.
36. Do they have **collective, small group** or **individual** projects (*or a mixture?*)?
37. Do they give **loans** to group members? If so, who decides? What do they use the loans for?
38. What happens to the SHG mothers if their child **drops out** of ALFA class?

SHGs – sustainability

39. What proportion of the SHGs have **continued** beyond the ALFA year? (*How do you know? Hearsay? Monitoring? Reports?*)
40. Are they **formally monitored** after the first year? If so, how? If not, why not?
41. Are their **income-generating projects** **collective** or **individual** (*or a mix?*)
42. What do mothers **spend** their money on? (*How do you know?*)
43. What are the **reasons for the success** of some SHGs?

44. What are the **reasons** some SHGs **stop functioning**?

AND FINALLY ...

45. What **ONE improvement** to the ALFA programme would you make?

46. What **ONE improvement** would you make to the SHG programme?

ASK IF THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME

APPENDIX IJ INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR IP COMMUNITY MOBILISER (CM)

Introduce yourself and the research project, and explain that their participation is important and appreciated.

Go through issues of confidentiality, anonymity etc.

Make sure they have a copy of the research brief.

Ask permission to record the interview.

Explain that you're going to ask some general questions about their job, then more specific questions about the ALFA programme, the government link schools and the mothers' self-help groups ...

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
Person(s) interviewed: e.g. CM		Languages used in interview: (tick ✓relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interviewee's gender:		Interviewee's religion:	
Interviewee's ethnicity:		Main home language(s):	
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

GENERAL

1. **How long** have you been working for this IP? (*name IP*)
2. **How long** have you been working on this **ALFA/Speed school** project? (*Always as a CM?*)
3. What did you **do before** you joined the programme?
4. What do you **like most** about the job?
5. What do you **dislike most** about the job?

JOB DESCRIPTION

6. What is **your role** within the programme?
7. What are the **main activities** of your job? (*ie. What do you do on an annual/ monthly/weekly basis? Probe about training, monitoring ALFA graduates & SHGs*)
8. **How many ALFA classes** are you working with this year? (*Clarify number of classes & schools and other venues*) In how many schools and kebeles?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

9. What **training** did you receive to do this job? (*How long? Who by? What sort of training?*)
10. Was it **adequate**? How could it have been **improved**?
11. Do you get any **ongoing professional development**? (*e.g. yearly refresher courses?*) If so, describe.

MAIN CHALLENGES

12. What are the **main challenges/difficulties** in doing your job successfully? (*Elicit several*)
 13. How can they be **overcome**?
- Ask about any relevant issues arising from the quarterly IP reports to Geneva Global

ALFA CLASSES & ALFA GRADUATES

14. What are the **main reasons for the success** of the ALFA classes?
15. **Which aspects** of ALFA classes could still be **improved** on?
16. Are the **ALFA graduates monitored** once they have finished the ALFA programme?
17. If so, **how** is this done? (*visits? telephone schools? By whom*) And how often? If not, why not? (*Probe about feasibility given the high no of schools, large area, & if the programme moves to another area*)
18. **What** specifically is **monitored**? (*enrolment? attendance? performance?*)
19. What **proportion** of ALFA graduates generally **stay on** in the link school until the end of the year? (*half?, most? almost all? Any differences between girls and boys? If so, why?*)
20. Do some **move to another school** during the first year? Why?
22. What are the **main reasons** ALFA graduates **drop out** of link schools (*at any time*)? Are they from a particular social groups (*older/younger, female/male?*)

GOVERNMENT (LINK) SCHOOLS

23. What do you think is **good** about the government link schools? Give examples.
24. What do you think **could be improved** in these link schools? Give examples.

SHGs

General

25. What are the **requirements** that the SHGs have to fulfil for Geneva Global? (*saving? meetings – how often? child's attendance at ALFA classes? anything else?*)
26. Who has **overall responsibility** for **monitoring** the SHGs during the ALFA year? How do they do this? (*Is anyone else involved? Does it vary according to kebele?*)
27. How **successful** do you think the SHG programme has been so far? Give examples.
28. What are the **main problems/difficulties**? Give examples. (*Prompt with examples from SHG interviews if necessary*)
29. How could the programme be **improved**?

Meetings

30. **How often** do **SHGs meet**? (*With you and without you?*)
31. **Where** and **when** are the **meetings** usually held?
32. **How long** do **meetings** usually last?
33. What is **attendance** like? (*How do you know?*)

34. **What happens** at these meetings? *(Any difficulties? disputes? Give examples.)*

Training & support

35. When is the **woreda-level training** for office bearers usually held?

34. **Who** is involved? **What** do they do?

35. How **useful** is it? How could it be **improved**?

36. Is there any **follow-up support/training** given? If so, what? By whom?

37. **How often** do you conduct **training/attend meeting** with SHGs? *(With all or just office bearers?)*

38. **Who decides** what happens in the training? *(Set programme or do the SHGs make requests?)*

39. What are the **main issues/concerns raised by mothers** at meetings and trainings?

40. **Who else** is involved in **supporting** the SHGs? *(e.g. kebele or woreda officials?)* If so, what do they do?

Finances

41. How much do groups usually **save** per month? Who decides?

42. What happens if mothers **can't make the payments**?

43. **When** do the SHGs get the **seed/start-up money** *(Probe about late payment and reasons why? Probe about contradictions with SHG accounts)*

44. What do SHGs **invest their money** in? Give examples.

45. Do they give **loans** to group members? What do they use the loans for?

46. What happens to the SHG mothers if their child **drops out** of ALFA class?

SHGs – sustainability

47. What proportion of the SHGs have **continued** beyond the ALFA year? *(How do you know? Monitoring? Hearsay? Reports?)*

48. Are they **formally monitored** after the first year? If so, how? If not, why not?

49. Are their **income-generating projects** **collective** or **individual** *(or a mix?)*

50. What do mothers **spend** their money on? *(How do you know?)*

51. What are the **reasons for the success** of some SHGs?

52. What are the **reasons** some SHGs **stop functioning**?

AND FINALLY ...

53. What **ONE improvement** to the ALFA programme would you make?

54. What **ONE improvement** would you make to the SHG programme?

ASK IF THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME

APPENDIX IK INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SPEED SCHOOL FACILITATOR

Introduce yourself and the research project, and explain that their participation is important and appreciated.

Go through issues of confidentiality, anonymity etc.

Make sure they have a copy of the research brief.

Ask permission to record the interview.

Explain you're going to ask you some general questions about their job, then more specific questions about the ALFA programme, the government link schools and the mothers' self-help groups ...

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
Person(s) interviewed: e.g. facilitator		Languages used in interview: (tick ✓ relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interviewee's gender:		Interviewee's religion:	
Interviewee's ethnicity:		Main home language(s):	
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

GENERAL

1. **How long** have you been working as a facilitator?
2. **How long** have you been facilitating classes in this school?
3. What did you **do before** you joined the programme?
4. What do you **like most** about the job?
5. What do you **dislike most** about the job?

JOB DESCRIPTION

6. What is **your role** within the programme?
7. What are the **main activities** of your job? (*ie. What do you do on an annual/ monthly/weekly basis? Probe about teaching ALFA classes, helping SHGs*)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & QUALITY ASSURANCE

8. What **training** did you receive to do this job? (*How long? Who by? What sort of training?*)
9. Was it **adequate**? How could it have been **improved**?
10. Do you get any **ongoing professional development**? (*e.g. yearly refresher courses?*)
If so, describe.
11. Who **monitors/assesses** your teaching? (TO? CM?) **How often** do they come?
12. Upon what basis is your **monthly bonus** decided? (*Who decides? What criteria?*)

MAIN CHALLENGES

13. What are the **main challenges**/difficulties in doing your job successfully? (*Elicit several*)
14. How can they be **overcome**?

ALFA CLASSES & ALFA GRADUATES

15. What are the **main reasons for the success** of the ALFA classes?
16. **Which aspects** of ALFA classes could still be **improved** on?
17. Are the **ALFA graduates monitored** once they have finished the ALFA programme?
18. If so, **how** is this done? (*visits? telephone schools? By whom*) And how often? If not, why not?
19. **What** specifically is **monitored**? (*enrolment? attendance? performance?*)
20. What **proportion** of ALFA graduates generally **stay on** in the link school until the end of the year? (*half?, most? almost all? Any differences between girls and boys? If so, why?*)
21. Do some **move to another school** during the first year? Why?
22. What are the **main reasons** ALFA graduates **drop out** of the link school (*at any time*)? Are they from a particular social groups (*older/younger, female/male?*)

CASE-STUDY GOVERNMENT (LINK) SCHOOL

23. What do you think is **good** about **this** government (link) school? Give examples.
24. What do you think **could be improved** in this school? Give examples.
25. What do the **ALFA graduates say** about the school when they first transfer?
26. Do any of them have **difficulty adapting**? Give examples. Any particular social groups? (*older/younger students, female/male?*)

SHGs

General

27. What are the **requirements** that the SHGs have to fulfil for Geneva Global? (*saving? meetings – how often? child's attendance at ALFA classes? anything else?*)
28. Who has **overall responsibility** for **monitoring** the SHGs during the ALFA year? How do they do this? (*Is anyone else involved? Does it vary according to kebele?*)
29. How **successful** do you think the SHG programme has been so far? Give examples.
30. What are the **main problems/difficulties**? Give examples. (*Prompt with examples from SHG interviews if necessary*)
31. How could the programme be **improved**?

Meetings

32. **How often** do **SHGs meet**?
33. **Where** and **when** are the **meetings** usually held?
34. **How long** do **meetings** usually last?
35. What is **attendance** like? (*How do you know?*)
36. **What happens** at these meetings? (*Any difficulties? disputes? Give examples.*)

Training & support

37. When is the **woreda-level training** for office bearers usually held?
38. **Who** is involved? **What** do they do?
39. How **useful** is it? How could it be **improved**?
40. Is there any **follow-up support/training** given? If so, what? By whom?
41. What are the **main issues/concerns raised by mothers** at meetings and trainings?
42. **Who else** is involved in **supporting** the SHGs? (*e.g. kebele or woreda officials?*) If so, what do they do?

Finances

43. How much do groups usually **save** per month? Who decides?
44. What happens if mothers **can't make the payments**?

45. **When** do the SHGs get the **seed/start-up money** (*Probe about late payment and reasons why? Probe about contradictions with SHG accounts*)
46. What do SHGs **invest their money** in? Give examples.
47. Do they give **loans** to group members? What do they use the loans for?
48. What happens to the SHG mothers if their child **drops out** of ALFA class?

SHGs – sustainability

49. What proportion of the SHGs have **continued** beyond the ALFA year? (*How do you know? Monitoring? Hearsay? Reports?*)
50. Are their **income-generating projects** **collective** or **individual** (*or a mix?*)
51. What do mothers **spend** their money on? (*How do you know?*)
52. What are the **reasons for the success** of some SHGs?
53. What are the **reasons** some SHGs **stop functioning**?

AND FINALLY ...

54. What **ONE improvement** to the ALFA programme would you make?
55. What **ONE improvement** would you make to the SHG programme?

ASK IF THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME

APPENDIX II INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WOREDA SCHOOL SUPERVISOR

Introduce yourself and the research project, and explain that their participation is important and appreciated.

Go through issues of confidentiality, anonymity etc.

Make sure they have a copy of the relevant research brief.

Ask permission to record the interview.

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
Person interviewed e.g. female/male woreda school supervisor		Languages used in interview: (tick ✓ relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

Explain that you are going to ask them about their job and what they know about the ALFA programme, then about the schools they supervise. They should think about all their schools, not just about this particular school.

GENERAL

1. **How long** have you been working as a woreda school supervisor?
2. What **did you do** before this?
3. What do you **like most** about the job?
4. What do you **dislike most** about the job?

JOB DESCRIPTION

5. What is **your role** as a school supervisor?
6. What are the **main activities** of your job? (*i.e. What do you do on an annual/monthly/weekly basis?*)
7. **How many schools** are under your supervision? **How often** do you **visit** them?
8. **How many** of them have/had **ALFA classes** in them?

MAIN CHALLENGES

9. What are the **main challenges**/difficulties in doing your job successfully? (*Elicit several*)
10. How can they be **overcome**?

ALFA PROGRAMME

11. What in your view is the **main aim** of the ALFA programme?
12. **What are the reasons** for the **success** of the ALFA classes?
13. **Which aspects** of the ALFA classes could still be **improved** on?
14. Has the presence of ALFA classes had an **impact** on the schools they are located in?
How? Give examples (*positive and negative*) If not, why not?
15. Has it **affected the way government school teachers teach**? If so, how? Give examples.
If not, why not?
16. What do the **government school principals** and **teachers think about** the programme? Why? Give examples.
17. What is **your opinion** about the ALFA programme? Why?

ACCESS TO LEARNING IN GENERAL

In the schools you supervise ...

18. Are students often **late** for school? Which social groups? (*younger/older, female/male? from poorer families?*) Why?
19. How are **latecomers** treated? Give examples.

20. What is **student attendance** like the schools? Why?
21. Are there **particular groups** of students who tend to have **poor attendance**? Why?
22. Do many students **repeat the year** in your schools? Any particular social groups? Why?
23. Are there many **overage** students? Any particular social groups? Why?
24. Why are they **overage**? (*start school late? repeat classes? drop in and out school?*)
25. What is student **dropout** like in your schools? Why?
26. Is **pregnancy** or **early marriage** an issue? For females and males? What happens to the mother-to-be/father-to-be if they are still in school?
27. Are **dropouts** from any **particular social groups**? If so, why?
28. What do schools do to improve **attendance** and **punctuality**, and **prevent drop out**?
29. What do **communities** do to help? (*PSTA? KETB? community elders?*)
30. How does **this government school** compare to the other ones you supervise? (*Is it similar or different as regards the above issues?*)

TEACHERS & TEACHING QUALITY

31. What are the **main obstacles to student learning** in the classroom?
32. In your schools, what ways do teachers contribute **positively** to students' learning experiences?
33. In what ways do teachers contribute **negatively** to students' learning experiences?
34. How would describe the level of **teacher professionalism** in your schools? (*e.g. absenteeism, treatment of students, lesson preparation? Does it vary among schools?*)
35. If poor, what could be done **to improve** it?
36. What is the **quality of teaching** like in your schools? Give examples.
37. How could it be **improved**?
38. How does this (case-study) school **compare** to the other schools you supervise as regards **teaching quality**. Give examples.

DISCIPLINE

39. What are the **school policies on discipline** (*especially corporal punishment*)?
40. Are they always **followed** by teachers? Give examples if not.
41. What is the **procedure** for dealing with teachers who **do not comply** with the policy on discipline?
42. Are **overage** students **disciplined** in the same way as other students? Are girls and boys?
43. How do **overage** students react to being disciplined? Do girls and boys react the same way, or differently?
44. How does this (case-study) school **compare** to the other schools you supervise as regards **disciplinary practices**. Give examples.

COMMUNITY/GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

45. How much **government** support does the school get? Give examples. How could it be improved?
46. How does the **PSTA support** the school? Give examples. How effective is it? How could it be improved?
47. How does the **KETB support** the school? Give examples. How effective is it? How could it be improved?

AND FINALLY ...

48. What would **most help** improve access to schooling for young people in the area?
49. What would **most help** you to improve the quality of education in schools?

ASK WHETHER THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU & THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME

APPENDIX IM INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR KEBELE/WOREDA MICRO-FINANCE OFFICER

Introduce yourself and the research project, and explain why their participation is important.
Go through issues of confidentiality, anonymity etc.,
Make sure they have a copy of the relevant research brief.
Ask permission to record the interview.

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
Person(s) interviewed: e.g. female/male kebele/woreda micro-finance officer		Languages used in the interview: (tick ✓ relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

Explain that you are going to ask them some questions about their job, then about the Geneva Global self-help groups, and finally about other kinds of self-help or microfinance groups.

JOB DESCRIPTION

1. **How long** have you been doing **this job** in the kebele/woreda?
2. **What** do you **do** in your job?
3. Did you receive **training** in micro-finance for this job? If so, by whom? What did it consist of?
4. **How long** have you been involved in the **ALFA programme** self-help groups?
5. What are your **duties** in this regard?
6. Did you receive any **training from Geneva Global** for this SHG programme?

GENEVA GLOBAL SHGS

Turning to the ALFA programme SHGs

7. **How many SHGs** have been set up in the **kebele/woreda**?
8. **How many schools** and **other venues** have been involved?
9. **How many** groups are still **active**?
10. **How many** are now **inactive**?
11. Do some women **transfer into other SHGs**? Why?
12. What are the **reasons** that some SHGs **stop functioning**? (*Probe: disagreements among members? unable to save money? poor accounting?*)
13. What are the **characteristics** of **successful** SHGs? (*Probe: good interpersonal relations? low-risk projects? individual projects?*)
14. What do you think could be done to have **more successful** groups?
15. What are the SHG women's **attitudes to education**? Give examples. (*all, most, some of them?*)

SELECTION

16. Who is **selected first** for the ALFA programme: the mothers or the children?
17. **Who** is **involved** in the **selection**? What is the **process**?
18. Do you think the process is **fair**? Why? Why not?

19. How are the **committee members** selected/elected? Who is **involved**?

TRAINING

20. **When** and **where** is the woreda-level SHG **training day** usually held?

21. **Who** is involved? (*from the woreda? IP? kebele?*) Are you? If so, how?

22. What **topics** are covered?

23. **How often** do the SHGs usually **meet** in the ALFA year?

24. How often do they meet **after the first year**? If different, why?

25. Do you have any **involvement** in these meetings? If so, what? How often?

26. Do you work at all with the IP's **community mobilisers**? If so, how?

FINANCES

27. When is your **first contact** with the SHGs? And who is it with? (*the whole group? committee members? all the kebele groups together?*) What is it about?

28. **How much** do members usually **save**? Who **decides** the amount?

29. How does the **saving and accounting** work? What are the procedures? (*Individual and/or group deposit books?*)

30. Who **checks** the accounts? How often? Any problems?

31. What are the **main difficulties** the groups encounter?

32. **When** do they get the **seed money**?

33. What are the **criteria for receiving** the seed money?

34. Do they ever get the **seed money early or late**? Why?

INVESTMENTS

35. What do most groups **invest** their seed money in? How do they decide?

36. Are **loans** given to members? What for? Who decides whether to grant the loan?

37. Have any group members had difficulty **paying back a loan**? What happens?

38. What do the women **spend the profits** on? (*individually? collectively? further investment? household expenses?*)

CONDITIONALITY

39. What happens if someone in the group **fails to save**? (*Who decides?*)

40. What happens if their child **misses ALFA class**?

OTHER SAVINGS GROUPS

41. Do the women participate in other **traditional savings groups**, such as *ekub*?

42. What is the **difference** between this and the SHG?

43. Has their involvement in the SHG **affected their participation** in *ekub*? If so, how?

44. Have you been involved in **other SHG programmes**?

45. If so, how do they **compare** to this programme? (*amount of money? support? conditions?*)

AND FINALLY ..

46. What **improvements** would you suggest to this SHG programme?

ASK IF THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME

APPENDIX IN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WOREDA/KEBELE WOMEN'S AFFAIRS OFFICER

Introduce yourself and the research project, and explain that their participation is important and appreciated.

Go through issues of confidentiality, anonymity etc.,

Make sure they have a copy of the relevant research brief.

Ask permission to record the interview.

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
Person(s) interviewed: e.g. woreda/kebele women's affairs officer		Languages used: (tick ✓ relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna ✓
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

Explain that you are going to ask about their job first, then about women's issues in general, then about girls and schooling, and finally about women's self-help groups and savings schemes.

JOB DESCRIPTION

1. **How long** have you been doing **this job**?
2. What are your **main responsibilities** and **duties/activities**?

WOMEN'S WELFARE & HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING

3. What is the **general financial situation** of women within the woreda/kebele?
4. **What proportion** is involved in **income-generating** activities? What sort of activities?
5. [To ask in Sidama areas] What is the proportion of **female-headed households**? Are there any **particular challenges** they face? If so, give examples.
6. [To ask in Sidama areas] What is the proportion of **polygamous households**? Are there any **particular challenges** they face? If so, give examples.
7. **How much control** do women have **over their finances** at the household level? (i.e. *Joint decisions with husband, other family members? Financial autonomy – a lot? some? A little?*) Does it depend on who earns the money?
8. **Who makes decisions** about sending children to school? (*women? men? joint decisions?*)

GIRLS & SCHOOLING

9. **What proportion** of young girls go to **school** in the woreda/kebele? (*Government schools? or any other kind of schooling?*)
10. How **well** do they perform at school? (*participation? test results?*) If not good, why?
11. **What proportion complete** Grade 8? If the figure is low, why?
12. [In Silte] Do any attend **alternative Islamic schools**?
13. Is **early marriage** an issue in the woreda/kebele? If so, what age do they usually get married? At what age/grade are girls often withdrawn from school?
14. What other **factors** can cause girls to **drop out** of school early?
15. What do you think **would most help** more girls fulfil their potential in school? (*probe: in school and out-of-school factors*)

ALFA PROGRAMME SHGS

If the respondent has not had any involvement with the programme, move on to the next section...

16. **Have you had** any involvement with the **ALFA programme** self-help groups? If so, what?
17. **How many SHGs** have been started in the woreda/kebele?
18. **What proportion** are still **active**?
19. **What proportion** are now **inactive**?
20. **What proportion** of SHGs continue beyond the first year?
21. What are the **reasons** that some SHGs **stop functioning**? (*disagreements among members? unable to save money? poor accounting? lack of support?*)
22. What are the **characteristics** of **successful** SHGs? (*good interpersonal relations? low-risk projects? individual projects? good support?*)
23. What do you think could be done to have **more successful** groups?

OTHER SELF-HELP & SAVINGS GROUPS FOR WOMEN

24. Do women in the woreda/kebele participate in other **traditional savings groups**, such as *ekub*?
25. What is the **difference** between this and the ALFA programme SHG?
26. Has their involvement in the SHG **affected their participation** in traditional savings groups? If so, how?
27. Are women in the woreda/kebele involved in **other SHG programmes**? (*government & non-government*)
28. If so, how do these programmes **compare** to this ALFA programme SHG? (*amount of money? support? conditions?*)

ASK WHETHER THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME

APPENDIX IO INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PSTA MEMBER

Introduce yourself and the research project, and explain that their participation is important and appreciated.

Go through issues of confidentiality, anonymity etc.

Make sure they have a copy of the relevant research brief.

Ask permission to record the interview.

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
Person(s) interviewed: e.g. PSTA secretary		Languages used in the interview: (tick ✓relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interviewee's gender:		Interviewee's main language:	
Interviewee's occupation			
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

Explain that you are going to ask them about the PSTA and then move on to more general questions about education and the community and what they know about the ALFA programme.

PSTA

1. What is the **role** of the **PSTA**?
2. **How many members** are there on the PSTA? What are their particular functions?
3. **How long** have you been on the PSTA?
4. What is **your role** on the PSTA?
5. **How often** does the PSTA committee meet?
6. **In what ways** does the PSTA **support** the school? Give examples.
7. **Where** does the PSTA get its **funding** from? (*parents? community contributions?*)
8. What is the PSTA most **satisfied** with about the school?
9. What are the PSTA's **main concerns** about the school?
10. What is being done (if anything) to **address these concerns**?

COMMUNITY & SCHOOLING

11. Approximately **how many** people are in the **kebele**?
12. What are the main **sources of income** for families living here?
13. What are the **main challenges** they face?
14. What is the general **attitude to schooling** in the community? Why?
15. Has the **ALFA programme** had any **impact** on community attitudes to schooling? If so, give examples. If not, why not?
16. What are the **main reasons** that some children **don't go to school**? Which children are most affected? (*older/younger, female/male, poorer households?*)
17. What **proportion** of students are **overage**? Why? (*late starting school? repeating years? dropping in and out of school?*)
18. Is student **late-coming** an issue in the school? (*If so, which students and why?*)
19. Is student **absenteeism** a concern? (*If so, for whom? Why? Any particular times of year?*)

20. What are the **main reasons** some children **drop out** from school? (*Any particular social groups? Younger/older? Female/male?*)
21. What does the **local community** do to **help** young people go to school, or go back to school?
22. What **more could** they do?

ALFA PROGRAMME

23. How **many years** has the school been involved with this ALFA programme?
24. What in your view is the **main aim** of the ALFA/Speed School programme?
25. How **successful** do you think the ALFA programme is? Give examples.
26. How could it be **improved**?
27. Has it had any **impact** on this government school? (*e.g. increased numbers, changed teaching methods, disciplinary practices*) If so, give examples. If not, why not?

AND FINALLY ...

28. What would **most help** improve access to schooling for young people in the area?
29. What would **most help** you to improve the quality of education in school?

ASK WHETHER THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME

APPENDIX IP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR KEBELE ELDER/COMMUNITY LEADER ON KETB

Introduce yourself and the research project, and explain that their participation is important and appreciated.

Go through issues of confidentiality, anonymity etc., to themselves.

Make sure they each have a copy of the research brief.

Ask permission to record the interview.

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
Person(s) interviewed: e.g. KETB secretary		Languages used: (tick ✓ relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interviewee's gender:		Interviewee's main language:	
Interviewee's occupation			
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

Explain that you are going to ask them about the KETB and then move on to more general questions about education and the community and what they know about the ALFA programme and the women's self-help groups.

KETB

1. What is the **role** of the KETB?
2. How many **members** are on the **board**? Who are they? What are their **roles**?
3. **How long** have you been on the KETB?
4. What is **your role** on the KETB?
5. **How often** does the board meet?
6. **In what ways** does the KETB **support** the school?
7. What is the board most **satisfied** with about the school?
8. What are the board's **main concerns** about the school?
9. What is being done (if anything) to **address these concerns**?
10. **What more** could be done?

COMMUNITY & SCHOOLING

11. Approximately **how many** people are in the **kebele**?
12. What are the main **sources of income** for families living here?
13. What are the **main challenges** they face?
14. What is the general **attitude to schooling** in the kebele? Why?
15. Has the **ALFA programme** had any **impact** on community attitudes to schooling? If so, give examples. If not, why not?
16. What are the **main reasons** that some children **don't go to school**? Which children are most affected?
17. What **proportion** of students are **overage**? Why? (*late starting school? repeating years? dropping in and out of school?*)
18. Is pupil **latecoming** an issue in the kebele? (*If so, which pupils and why?*)
19. Is pupil **absenteeism** a concern? (*If so, for whom? Why? Any particular times of year?*)
20. What are the **main reasons** some pupils **drop out** from school? (*Any particular social groups? Younger/older? Female/male? Poorer families?*)
21. What does the **local community or kebele** more generally do to **help** more children to go to school, or go back to school?
22. **What more** could they do?

ALFA PROGRAMME

23. How **many years** has the community been involved with this ALFA programme?
24. What in your view is the **main aim** of the ALFA programme?
25. How **successful** do you think the ALFA programme is? Give reasons.
26. How could it be **improved**?
27. Has it had any **impact** on this or other government schools? (*e.g. school numbers? teaching methods, disciplinary practices*) If so, give examples. If not, why not?

MOTHERS' SELF-HELP GROUPS

Ask whether they know much about the SHGs beyond the selection process. If you see they don't know much, move on to the next section...

28. What about the mothers' **self-help programme** – What in your view is the main aim of this programme?
29. How **successful** do you think the SHG programme is? Give reasons.
30. How could it be **improved**?
31. How many ALFA/Speed School programme mothers' self-help groups are currently **functioning** in the kebele?
32. What are the characteristics of the groups that are **successful**?
33. What do the mothers use the money for?
34. What proportion of the groups **have stopped functioning**?
35. What are the reasons that some groups fail?
36. What is the **effect/impact** of these ALFA self-help groups on other more **traditional group savings** and cooperation, such as *ekub*?

ALFA & SHG SELECTION PROCESS

37. What is the **process for selecting** the children or the mothers for the programme? Which comes first, children or mothers?
38. What are the **criteria for selection**?
39. **Who is involved** in the decision-making process?
40. What happens if there is **disagreement** on the candidates?
41. Do **community members** perceive the process to be **fair**? Why? Why not?

42. Once the **self-help group** has been formed, how are the **committee members** selected/elected? (*Who is involved? Where? When?*)
43. What are the **criteria for selection/election**?
44. Is there any aspect of these selection/election processes that you think could be **improved**? How?

AND FINALLY ...

45. What would **most help** improve access to schooling for young people in the area?
46. What would **most help** you to improve the quality of education in school?

ASK WHETHER THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME

APPENDIX IQ GGE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT

GENERAL

1. What in your view is the overall aim of the GG programme in Ethiopia?
2. What in your view are the most successful aspects of the GG programme?
3. What are the main challenges to the programme?
4. How do you think can they be overcome?
5. Looking at the various components of the programme:
 - **SS classes**
 - **SHGs**
 - **Teacher education** to link schools – Why has this been changed from teachers' skills development in practice-based learning to link school Income generating – to help the needy with school materials....?
 - **Pre-school** (anything else?)
- ... To what extent are these programmes in place? (If abandoned, or coverage limited, why? Which areas?)
6. What changes have you brought to the operation since you came on board (as regards the 4 different components: SS, SHGs, teacher ed, pre-school?)
7. What more would you like to see done/changed?

RELATIONSHIPS WITH GVT/WOREDAS

8. Is GGE's relationship with government primarily at regional/zonal or woreda level? What does your agreement entail?
9. What makes the relationship work well? Give examples.
10. What causes relationships to be more difficult? Give examples.
11. On balance how are working relationships with the woredas you're working with? How could they be improved?
12. How are the woredas/kebeles you work with selected? And by whom
13. What's the difference between working in SNNPR and working in Tigray? (Any other region?)

SHGs

14. What do you see as the purpose of the SHG component of the programme?
15. How successful has it been so far? Give examples.
16. What are the main challenges?
17. Tell me about the selection process for the mothers? Who should be involved?
18. How fair do you think it is in practice? How do you monitor that?
19. What is GG's policy on transferring the money? (Where is it transferred to? IP or woreda?)
20. When is it transferred? (Is it the same in all woredas? What's the rationale?)
21. What difficulties (if any) have you had in the financial dealings with gvt (Give examples). How have you coped with them?

22. Woreda-level training – When is it supposed to happen? What’s the rationale?
23. Is that the same time/different times across woredas? Why?/Why not? (If relevant ... why not earlier when prices are lower?)
24. How much is given to each SHG? Do you think the sum is sufficient? (Why? Why not?)
25. What is your view on collective rather than individual/small group investments? Why?
26. Who has the responsibility to check that the money has been given to the SHG?
27. Is it always done? What happens if it is not transferred? How often is that the case?
28. How much training do you expect SHGs to have? And by whom? To what extent do you think that’s happening in the field? (If not, why not?)
29. What percentage of women participate in other SHGs, as well as GG? Is that something you expected/welcome? (Why? Why not?)
30. How sustainable are the SHGs? (How long after the SS year do you expect them to last?)
31. To what extent is GG able to follow up on the SHGs after the initial year? (Why/why not?)
32. Is there any formal agreement with woredas to look after them after the initial year? (If so what? How?)
33. The SHG manual – to what extent is it being used? (If not much, why? What do IPs use to guide them in the process?)

RELATIONSHIPS WITH IPS

34. How did GG select the IPs?
35. What exactly is the relationship between the IP and GG?
36. What are the main issues that the IPs raise about the programme whenever they have meetings with GG?
37. Which IPs are working well with GG? What characterises these good working relationships?
38. What about relationships with IPS that are less successful, what doesn’t work?
39. How often does the IP report back to GG? How? What information do they give?
40. Is there any monitoring of IPs in the field? (If so, by whom? How does it work? Give examples)
41. Do all IPs get the same amount of money? What does it depend on?
42. What are the differences in role between TO and CM?
43. Who decides about the number of sites /Speed schools & SHGs to be followed by the CM and of by the TO? On what basis?
44. What about when the IP leaves the woreda to work in another one?
To what extent are they expected to follow-up on the previous woreda? Are they given extra resources to do that?

SPEED SCHOOL GRADUATES

45. What in your view is the purpose of the SS classes?
46. What are the main successes so far?
47. What are the main challenges?
48. Who are the out-of-school children who are targeted (never been to school or dropouts or both?)
49. Who’s involved in the selection process? (Do you think it is fair?)
50. Who tracks the SS graduates once they leave SS classes? How? For how long?
51. How reliable is this tracking? How could it be improved?
52. How are SS graduates tracked once the IP has moved onto another woreda?
53. Once SS grads reintegrate into gvt link schools, what are the main challenges to keeping sts in schools, in your view?
54. Does GG help in any way to help keep them in school/ (If so how? Teacher ed component? If not, do you think GG should be involved? How?)
55. With unlimited resources/no constraints what ONE change would you make to the programme to improve its effectiveness?

HAVE YOU ANY QUESTIONS FOR ME?



APPENDIX IR GGE M&E INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

GENERAL

1. What in your view is the overall aim of the GG programme in Ethiopia?
2. What in your view are the most successful aspects of the GG programme?
3. What are the main challenges to the programme?
4. How can they be overcome?

M&E - GENERAL

5. What does your job entail being in charge of M&E?
6. When you joined the project, how would you characterise GG's M&E strategy? (What was working well? What were the main challenges?)
7. What changes have you brought about since you joined?
8. What are your main priorities in M&E and why (i.e. which aspects of the programme? E.g. SHG saving, IP performance, facilitator performance ..).
9. Who is doing the monitoring and how? (What are the funding & resource implications?)
10. Is there any training being provided for those involved in M&E? (Who by?)
11. What are your main constraints? (Money? Govt interference? GG US? Staff capacity?)

SPECIFICS - SHGS

12. How do you monitor the selection of SS children? How fair do you think it is? How could it be improved?
13. SHGs – money; how do you monitor & check that all the money has reached the SHG groups? Have there been any cases where the money hasn't reached its destination? (Where? Why?)
14. Do you monitor the savings of the various groups? (If so, how? What does the info tell you? Do you have savings targets?)
15. Do you monitor/intend to monitor the SHG groups? Why?/Why not? (If so, for how long? How?)

IPs

16. What monitoring functions is the IP supposed to carry out? (TO? CMs? Facilitators?)
17. What form of feedback do they give GG and how often? (Oral, written?)
18. What kind of training do they get? (By whom? How often? What does it cover?)
19. Have they got specific instruments/QA checklists that they are supposed to use in M & E? (If so, get copies; if not, why not?)
20. Who monitors & evaluates what the IP does? (How? How often? What criteria?)
21. What about evaluating specifically:
 - the TO?
 - the CM?
 - and the facilitator? (Criteria? Who does it? How successful is it? What are the problems?)
22. What happens if an IP, or a particular person in post, is judged not to be doing their job well? (Give examples)
23. What are the main issues/problems that have arisen out of the M&E so far?
24. Are the M&E issues the same/different in SNNPR and in Tigray? Give examples (Any other region?)

SPEED SCHOOL GRADUATES

25. What monitoring of the SS graduates takes place after they complete Speed School? (How often? For how long? Who by? Who gets the feedback?)
26. How reliable is the tracking? How do you know? How could it be improved?
27. How are SS graduates tracked once the IP has moved onto another woreda?
28. What are the main challenges to reliable monitoring of SS graduates?
29. How is GG intending to address them?
30. With unlimited resources/no constraints what ONE change would you make to the programme to improve its effectiveness?

HAVE YOU ANY QUESTIONS?

APPENDIX IS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR GGE SHG COORDINATOR

1. What's your experience of SHGs in Ethiopia?
 2. What do you see as the purpose/aim of the SHG component of the GGE programme?
 3. From what you've seen so far, what do you think are the most successful aspects of the programme with regard to SHGs?
 4. What are the main challenges?
 5. From your experience working with other SHGs, what is your view on the following, and why?
 - Seed money or cash in kind?
 - If seed money – when? Early, mid, late in the SS year?
 - Individual or collective saving?
 - Individual or collective investment?
 - Group size and composition?
 6. What have you found happening in the field (as regards the above) on your recent visits?
 7. What have the SHG members been saying?
 - What are they most satisfied about?
 - What are they least satisfied about?
 10. From your other experiences working with SHGs what kind of support (and over what period) do you think the SHGs need?
 11. At the moment SHGs are not followed up after the initial SS year? What's your view on this? What changes would you bring about?
 - Questions on internal report on SHGs:
 12. With an unlimited budget, what ONE change would you make to improve the current programme?
- ANY QUESTIONS?

APPENDIX IIA OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SHG WOREDA-LEVEL TRAININGS

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of meeting:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
Person(s) observed: e.g. x woreda training of SHG office bearers		Languages used in meeting: (tick ✓ relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Meeting recorded:	YES/NO	Meeting transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

No. of trainees present:		No. of SHGs represented:	
Focus SHG: office bearers present ✓	Chairperson Secretary Treasurer		
Names & posts of facilitators: e.g. woreda women's officer, IP TO			

Comment on physical aspects for training: ✓ good/adequate/inadequate & give reasons

Features	Good	Adequate	Poor	Notes
Location				
Room size				
Acoustics				
Seating				
Writing materials				
Refreshments				
Other				

AIMS/OBJECTIVES:

List the stated aims/objectives of the training day (if given)

ACTIVITIES:

	Time:	Led by:	Topic:	Content/activities	Observations (see notes below)
1.	9am	e.g. Chief woreda officer & Geneva Global	e.g. Introduction	e.g. Welcome given to participants and day's programme explained.	
2.					
3.					

OBSERVATIONS:

Use the following questions to guide your observation notes on each stage of the training:

What languages are used to deliver the training (by the facilitators? by the participants)?

How engaged are the participants in general? And the focus SHG participants?

How well do they seem to understand the content?

How interactive are the sessions?

Are any handouts/materials given out (get hold of copies of any documentation)?

What (if any) teaching/learning aids are used?

At break times in the session, use the opportunity to talk informally to SHG participants, to gauge their levels of understanding/interest and their concerns/queries

SUMMARY REFLECTIONS After the training, write a summary paragraph, covering the following:

What were the main points the facilitators were trying to get across?

What were the main concerns/questions from SHG participants?

How successful do you think the training day was? Give reasons.

What follow-up do you think participants will need?

Summary



APPENDIX IIB OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SHG MEETINGS

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of meeting:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
Person(s) observed: e.g. SHG meeting (6 present).		Languages used: (tick ✓relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

How many people are present?

Are there any latecomers to the meeting? Why?

Are there any absentees? Why?

Is the meeting formal (*i.e. Is there a chair, an agenda?*) or informal?

Is the CM (or other person) present? What is their role?

Write notes on what issues are discussed formally and informally, in the order they arise:

Topics/activities	Comments
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Note any general observations on proceedings below and overleaf:

APPENDIX IIC OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL VISITS

School name (use pseudonym)		Dates of visits:	
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Following observations around the school compound and prompted by the questions below, write notes in each box

Location and infrastructure (Also see School and community profile sheet)

Is the school **near** a road, bus stop or market?

Is the school **compound** fenced/walled? Is there a school gate?

Is there a **thoroughfare** through the compound? (e.g. a shortcut from the village to a main road)

Is the compound **clean** and **tidy**? Is it decorated?

Are **animals** on the compound (either brought through or free-roaming)?

Does the school compound include **sports fields**? a **playground**? an **assembly ground**?

Is there any **cultivation** on the school compound? What is cultivated?

How many **classrooms** are there? Are there grades without a classroom? Which ones?

Is there a dedicated **staff room**? **Principal's office**? **Administration office**?

What is the general **condition** of all the rooms (walls, doors, windows)?

What is displayed on the **walls** of each type of room?

What is the condition of the **furniture** in all the rooms?

How many **toilets** are on the compound? Are there dedicated toilets for girls, boys, male and female staff?

What is the **condition of these toilet buildings**? Are they clean? Are they safe to use?

Is there **drinking water** on the school compound? Where does it come from? Who collects it? Where is it stored?

Is there **electricity** on this compound? To what extent is it used in the school? How constant is the supply?

Are there teachers' **houses** on the compound? How many? Who lives in them?

Are there any **other buildings** or **resources** on the school site?

Social interactions

What goes on in the school compound during lesson time? Are there many pupils or teachers **out of class** during lesson time? What are they doing?

Do pupils **leave** the compound during school hours (e.g. at break)? Where do they go?

What **formal school activities** take place in the school compound?

How are pupils organised for formal activities in the school compound (e.g. assembly / class lines)?

How do the **pupils** use the compound at break time? What kinds of activities do the pupils do?

What kinds of pupils **group** together? What groups of pupils stay away from each other?

Do different pupils do different kinds of **activities**? Do they occupy different places and amounts of space in the compound?

Are there any signs of **teasing/bullying** or **fighting**? Who appear to be the perpetrators/victims? Is there any intervention by teachers, prefects, other pupils?

Where do **teachers** go at break times? Do they interact with the pupils? What kinds of interactions?

How do the teachers use the staff room? How do the teachers use the compound?

Which teachers group together or stay away from each other? Do they occupy different places and amounts of space?

How do the teachers relate to each other? Where do teachers go if they are not teaching during lesson time?

Do pupils have specific **duties/jobs** to do in and around the school compound (*cleaning, bell-ringing, digging*)? Are particular duties carried out by specific kinds of pupils?

Do teachers have specific duties/jobs to do in and around the school compound (*supervision, discipline, sports*)? Are particular duties carried out by specific kinds of teachers?

Apart from teachers and pupils who is allowed in to the compound? What kinds of people are they?

Is there a controlled **school gate**? Who controls it? What time does it open and close?

What happens if a student comes late to school?

Are there **hawkers** or **traders** around the school gate or compound? Who else hangs around the school gate?

Are there many **parents or community members** on the school compound at any time? When? Why are they there? What are they doing?

What kinds of interactions do these visitors / passers-by have with the teachers? pupils?

Have you observed any **critical incidents** in and around the school?

APPENDIX IID CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

School: <i>(use pseudonym)</i>				Date:			
Researcher(s):				Interpreter(s):			
Grade:				Class:			
Time:				Duration of lesson:			
Teacher initials:				Female/male:			
Subject:				Topic:			
No of sts Present:	F:	M:	T:	No of sts on register:	F:	M:	T:
Estimated percentage of overage sts in class: <u>Underline response</u>				<i>Under 25%; 25-50%; 50–70%; over 70%</i>			

Classroom (Location? size? condition? Chalkboard – size, position & condition? Furniture amount & condition? Windows & light? wall charts?):

Seating (Adequate seating & desks; inadequate seating & desks; students on the floor):

Student grouping (According to gender, age or other social groups? Who sits at the front, back & sides?)

Resources (Exercise books, textbooks and other materials such as pencils, bags) Underline response
All or almost all/ most / some / almost no students have exercise books and pencils with them.
All or almost all/ most/ some/ almost no students have textbooks with them.

During the lesson, note the teacher and student activities (and their timings), making comments in the third column, about the research issues noted below:

Note also **critical incidents** (examples of particular incidences of student encouragement or discouragement, age or gender-differentiated behaviours, expectations, language, abuse etc.) and relevant **quotes**, and **questions raised** to ask about later

Mins	T (teacher) activity	St (student) activity	Comments/quotes

After the lesson consider the following issues based on your overall impression of the lesson in consultation with the interpreter. **Underline** the appropriate answer(s) (more than one option is possible for several categories) and write extra notes where necessary.

TEACHER ACTIVITY

Main language(s) used in the lesson (MOI):	<i>Amharic</i> <i>English</i> <i>Sidamigna</i> <i>Siltigna</i>
Other language(s) used in the lesson:	<i>Amharic</i> <i>English</i> <i>Sidamigna</i> <i>Siltigna</i>
Main teaching activities:	<i>Lecturing to the class</i> <i>individual questions</i> <i>copying from the board</i> <i>doing an exercise on the board</i> <i>getting students to read aloud</i> <i>doing an exercise from the board (in an exercise book)</i> <i>Other (specify):</i>
Other teaching activities:	<i>whole-class question and answer</i> <i>choral repetition</i> <i>doing an exercise from a textbook</i> <i>group/pair discussion</i>
Level of difficulty of the lesson for most students:	<i>too easy</i> <i>too difficult</i> <i>about right</i> <i>difficult to tell</i>
Structure of the lesson:	<i>good</i> <i>average</i> <i>poor</i>
Teacher position in the classroom:	<i>at the front all or almost all the time</i> <i>moving around some of the time</i> <i>moving around a lot</i>
Teacher audibility:	<i>audible to all students</i> <i>audible to most students</i> <i>audible to a few students</i>

Teacher tone mainly:	<i>Intimidating and/or dismissive</i> <i>neutral</i> <i>supportive</i>
Explanations of concepts:	<i>mainly clear (giving examples, repeating when necessary)</i> <i>mainly unclear</i>
Amount of teacher talk:	<i>mainly monologue</i> <i>sometimes interactive</i> <i>often interactive</i>
Types of questions:	<i>mainly closed</i> <i>mainly open</i> <i>a mix</i> <i>n/a, very few questions asked</i>
Questions were usually asked by:	<i>pointing to individual students</i> <i>naming individual students</i> <i>letting students shout out</i> <i>demanding choral response</i>
Questions were mainly directed to:	<i>girls; boys; both; n/a, very few questions asked</i> <i>older sts; younger students; both; n/a</i> <i>students at the front; at the back; all round the class; n/a</i>
Feedback to students:	<i>often/sometimes correcting answers</i> <i>often/sometimes praising answers</i> <i>often/sometimes reprimanding wrong answers</i> <i>often/sometimes responding to contributions</i> <i>often/sometimes ignoring contributions</i> <i>often/sometimes/correcting an exercise</i> <i>often/sometimes using peer correction</i>
Use of chalkboard:	<i>legible writing</i> <i>illegible writing</i> <i>mainly for students to copy</i> <i>mainly for interactive activities</i> <i>used for some interactive activities</i>
Use of teaching aids:	<i>visual aids</i> <i>textbooks</i> <i>real objects (realia).</i>
Discipline:	<i>Who did the teacher discipline and how?</i> <i>(n/a if no disciplinary actions seen)</i>

Teacher response to student bullying, discrimination:	<i>ignored it; didn't see; reprimanded students; don't know; not applicable.</i>
Classroom management:	<i>moved individual students; grouped students for activities; didn't move students</i>
Other comments:	

STUDENT– TEACHER INTERACTION

Student-teacher interaction was generally:	<i>positive; cooperative; silent; uncooperative. Give examples:</i>
Student oral participation was mainly:	<i>girls; boys; both. younger students; older students; both students at the front/at the back/ a mix very little student participation</i>
Student behaviour was:	<i>Very good; generally good; some messing around; poor If poor, which students misbehaved and how?</i>
Did students have opportunities to ask the teacher questions?	<i>Often; sometimes; not at all Which students (if any) asked questions?</i>
Other comments:	

STUDENT–STUDENT INTERACTION

General class atmosphere among students:	<i>good neutral poor difficult to tell</i>
Interactions between older and younger students:	<i>Give examples, if applicable:</i>
Interactions between female and male students:	<i>Give examples, if applicable:</i>
Teasing, bullying:	<i>Give examples, if applicable:</i>

Student interruptions:	<i>Do any students interrupt others in class? Who interrupts whom?)</i>
Other comments:	

SEATING PLAN

Draw classroom (including student and teacher positions, chalkboard, windows, door, indicating, where possible, the seating and position of female, male students, and overage students.



APPENDIX IIIA DOCUMENTARY DATA COLLECTION

Try to collect hard or soft copies of the following. If unable to do so, photograph the relevant parts with the project camera.

FROM IPS and/or Geneva Global

IP quarterly reports from the three case-study woredas (Shebedino, Loka Abeya & Silte)
Tracking list of ALFA graduates for the three woredas
Copy of the list of 21 daily activities (in English and Amharic) that ALFA classes do.
Quality assurance tools from Geneva Global for CMs to use to monitor ALFA classes & SHGs

From the schools

EMIS data on enrolments, repetition, dropout, performance etc for last four academic years (2011–12 to 2014–2015)
Enrolment data for this academic year (2015–2016)
Enrolment data of ALFA graduates for these last four years (or however many years they have been feeding into the school too).
Performance data for ALFA graduates for 2014–2015
Any copies of school rules, regulations
Take photos of attendance registers for classes the day you visited them (to compare against your observation numbers)
Any minutes of meetings – e.g. PSTA, KETB, SHG

From the SHGs/IPs

SHG account books for the focus SHGs.

From the regional/woreda offices

EMIS data for SNNPR last four years (2014–2015 backwards).

For the background/introductory section of the report, we'll need the current education policy and/or any other policy documents, e.g. on medium of instruction, or discipline, specific to SNNPR, composition and remit of PSTAs and KETBs.

APPENDIX IIIB SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

BASIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

School Name:				
Foundation of the school: <i>(when, by whom)</i>				
Size of catchment: <i>(usual & furthest distance pupils come from – time or distance)</i>	Usual: Farthest:			
School levies/contributions: <i>(e.g. PSTA fee)</i>				
School grants <i>(annual? termly?)</i> for development:				
Grades, no of classes & students per grade for 2015–2016:	No of classes	Females	Males	TOTAL
Grade 1				
Grade 2				
Grade 3				
Grade 4				
Grade 5				
Grade 6				
Grade 7				
Grade 8				
TOTALS				
Enrolment trends – increasing, decreasing or staying the same (for girls/boys?)				
Curriculum subjects taught:				
Extra or co-curricular activities <i>(sports teams, clubs):</i>				

INFRASTRUCTURE

Number of school buildings and size of grounds:	
Administration block <i>(no of rooms)</i>	
Number of classrooms <i>(& condition)</i>	
Classroom furniture <i>(adequate amount? condition?)</i>	
Toilet facilities for staff and students <i>(numbers, gender-segregated or communal, condition)</i>	
Library	

Sports facilities	
Staffroom (<i>size, furniture</i>)	
Other facilities (<i>prayer rooms, hall, computer room, library</i>)	

SCHOOL POLICIES

Note the main features of these policies, particularly with regard to differentiation by age, gender or other social category.

Admission and readmission policy for pupils (<i>especially overage</i>)	
Repetition/promotion policy	
Code of conduct for staff	
Disciplinary action against staff	
School regulations for students (<i>absenteeism, punctuality, behaviour in & out of class</i>)	
Disciplinary practices on pupils (<i>especially use of corporal punishment</i>)	
School monitors (<i>number? gender?</i>)	
Procedures for allocating school tasks (<i>e.g. cleaning, ringing school bell, flag raising</i>)	
School uniform (<i>if relevant - note gender differences</i>)	
Guidelines for parents (<i>e.g. financial and other contributions to school, uniforms, labour etc.</i>)	

SCHOOL TIMETABLE

Include school start time, timings for assembly, prayers, cleaning, break times, different lessons

MORNING SHIFT

Start time	Finish time	Activity (<i>e.g. assembly, first period, break etc.</i>)	Notes

Time set aside for weekly activities?

Day	Times	Activity (e.g. school cleaning, agriculture)

AFTERNOON SHIFT

Start time	Finish time	Activity (e.g. assembly, first period, break etc.)	Notes

Time set aside for weekly activities?

Day	Times	Activity (e.g. school cleaning, agriculture, prayers)

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Principal

Initials: F/M	Religion:	Main language(s):
Qualifications		
No of years in teaching:		
No of years as a head teacher:		
No of years in the present school:		

Vice principal

Initials: F/M	Religion	Main language(s):
Qualifications:		
No of years in teaching:		
No of years as vice principal:		
No of years in the present school:		

Teachers in focus shift

Number of qualified teachers (highest qualification)	Female	Male	TOTAL
BA degree			
Diploma of Education			
Certificate of Education			
Completed Grade 10–12 of secondary school			
TOTALS			

No of teachers in positions of responsibility	Female	Male	TOTAL
Unit leaders			
Department heads			
Club representatives			
Number of administrative staff			
Other staff			

COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL

PSTA	Female	Male	TOTAL
PSTA members by gender			
PSTA roles	School/community role (e.g. principal, kebele elder)		F/M
PSTA chair			
PSTA secretary			
PSTA treasurer			
Other members (numbers & gender)	n/a		
Dates of last three meetings	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
Main issues for the PTA	1.		

	2.
	3.

KETB	Female	Male	TOTAL
KETB members by gender			
KETB roles	School/community role		F/M
KETB chair			
KETB secretary			
KETB treasurer			
Other members (<i>numbers & gender</i>)	n/a		
Dates of last three meetings	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
Main issues for the KETB	1.		
	2.		
	3.		

LOCALITY AND COMMUNITY

Town or gott/kebele/woreda:	
Population of local community (approx.):	
Physical location of community (<i>proximity to regional border, main road, river, hills etc.</i>):	
Main community buildings/areas (<i>markets, places of worship, medical facilities etc.</i>):	
Main health issues, illnesses:	
Periods when seasonal labour is in demand: (<i>e.g. harvesting, planting of particular crops</i>)	
Main parental/family occupation/income sources:	

APPENDIX IIIC SHG BASIC INFORMATION SHEET

School name: (use pseudonym)	
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Ask the IP to fill in the numbers of SHGs for the relevant years (depending on how long the programme has been operating in the school/kebele)

Mark **DN** if it is not known; mark a **?** next to a number if not sure.

Numbers of SHGs in the case-study school

ALFA year e.g. 2011–2012	No of SHGs in the school	No of SHGs still operating in 2015–2016	No of SHGs still operating in 2015–2016 (checked by researcher)

Total numbers of SHGs in the kebele in which the case-study school is located

ALFA year e.g. 2011–2012	No SHGs in the kebele	No of SHGs still operating in 2015–2016 (IP numbers)	No of SHGs still operating in 2015–2016 (checked by researcher)

Ask the IP to provide you with the contact telephone numbers (use form below) of one of the committee members for each of the groups in the school/kebele. Contact them by phone and ascertain whether the group is still fully functioning (FF) as a whole group, or half-functioning (HF) (a few individual projects), or dissolved (DSD). Put a **?** next to any info that you feel unsure about.

ALFA class/school ALFA year & (group 1,2,3,4)	Position	Contact no	FF/HF or DSD	No of current members

SHGS from other ALFA classes/schools in the kebele

ALFA year, class/school	Position	Contact no	FF/HF or DSD	No of current members

APPENDIX IIID STUDENT STATISTICS FORM

School Initials	
-----------------	--

ENROLMENTS

2012–13	Total Female	Total Male	TOTAL	Female ALFA	Male ALFA	TOTAL
Grade 1						
Grade 2						
Grade 3						
Grade 4						
Grade 5						
Grade 6						
Grade 7						
Grade 8						
SUB TOTAL						
Total						

2013–2014	Female	Male	TOTAL	Female ALFA	Male ALFA	TOTAL
Grade 1						
Grade 2						
Grade 3						
Grade 4						
Grade 5						
Grade 6						
Grade 7						
Grade 8						
SUB TOTAL						
Total						

2014–2015	Female	Male	TOTAL	Female ALFA	Male ALFA	TOTAL
Grade 1						
Grade 2						
Grade 3						
Grade 4						
Grade 5						
Grade 6						
Grade 7						
Grade 8						
SUB TOTAL						
Total						

2015–2016	Female	Male	TOTAL	Female ALFA	Male ALFA	TOTAL
Grade 1						
Grade 2						
Grade 3						
Grade 4						
Grade 5						
Grade 6						
Grade 7						
Grade 8						
SUB TOTAL						
Total						

OVERAGE STUDENTS (number in each pupil group)

2012–2013	Age	Female	Male	TOTAL
Grade 1	9+			
Grade 2	10+			
Grade 3	11+			
Grade 4	12+			
Grade 5	13+			
Grade 6	14+			
Grade 7	15+			

Grade 8	16+			
SUB TOTAL				
Total				
2013–2014	Age	Female	Male	TOTAL
Grade 1	9+			
Grade 2	10+			
Grade 3	11+			
Grade 4	12+			
Grade 5	13+			
Grade 6	14+			
Grade 7	15+			
Grade 8	16+			
SUB TOTAL				
Total				

2014–2015	Age	Female	Male	TOTAL
Grade 1	9+			
Grade 2	10+			
Grade 3	11+			
Grade 4	12+			
Grade 5	13+			
Grade 6	14+			
Grade 7	15+			
Grade 8	16+			
SUB TOTAL				
Total				

2015–2016	Age	Female	Male	TOTAL
Grade 1	9+			
Grade 2	10+			
Grade 3	11+			
Grade 4	12+			
Grade 5	13+			
Grade 6	14+			
Grade 7	15+			
Grade 8	16+			
SUB TOTAL				
Total				

REPEATERS (number of students repeating each grade from the previous year)

2012–13	Total Female	Total Male	TOTAL	Female ALFA	Male ALFA	TOTAL
Grade 1						
Grade 2						
Grade 3						
Grade 4						
Grade 5						
Grade 6						
Grade 7						
Grade 8						
SUB TOTAL						
Total						

2013–2014	Female	Male	TOTAL	Female ALFA	Male ALFA	TOTAL
Grade 1						
Grade 2						
Grade 3						
Grade 4						
Grade 5						
Grade 6						
Grade 7						
Grade 8						

SUB TOTAL						
Total						

2014–2015	Female	Male	TOTAL	Female ALFA	Male ALFA	TOTAL
Grade 1						
Grade 2						
Grade 3						
Grade 4						
Grade 5						
Grade 6						
Grade 7						
Grade 8						
SUB TOTAL						
Total						

2015–2016	Female	Male	TOTAL	Female ALFA	Male ALFA	TOTAL
Grade 1						
Grade 2						
Grade 3						
Grade 4						
Grade 5						
Grade 6						
Grade 7						
Grade 8						
SUB TOTAL						
Total						

ABSENCES (from the attendance registers, total number of days absent per term according to student group)

2012–13	SEMESTER ONE			SEMESTER TWO			YEARLY TOTAL
	Female	Male	TOTAL	Female	Male	TOTAL	
Grade 1							
Grade 2							
Grade 3							
Grade 4							
Grade 5							
Grade 6							
Grade 7							
Grade 8							
SUB TOTAL							
Total							

2012–2013	SEMESTER ONE			SEMESTER TWO			YEARLY TOTAL
	ALFA Female	ALFA Male	TOTAL	ALFA female	ALFA male	TOTAL	
Grade 1							
Grade 2							
Grade 3							
Grade 4							
Grade 5							
Grade 6							
Grade 7							
Grade 8							
SUB TOTAL							
Total							

2013–2014	SEMESTER ONE			SEMESTER TWO			YEARLY TOTAL
	Female	Male	TOTAL	Female	Male	TOTAL	
Grade 1							
Grade 2							
Grade 3							
Grade 4							
Grade 5							
Grade 6							
Grade 7							
Grade 8							

SUB TOTAL							
Total							

2013–2014	SEMESTER ONE			SEMESTER TWO			YEARLY TOTAL
	ALFA Female	ALFA Male	TOTAL	ALFA female	ALFA male	TOTAL	
Grade 1							
Grade 2							
Grade 3							
Grade 4							
Grade 5							
Grade 6							
Grade 7							
Grade 8							
SUB TOTAL							
Total							

2014–15	SEMESTER ONE			SEMESTER TWO			YEARLY TOTAL
	Female	Male	TOTAL	Female	Male	TOTAL	
Grade 1							
Grade 2							
Grade 3							
Grade 4							
Grade 5							
Grade 6							
Grade 7							
Grade 8							
SUB TOTAL							
Total							

2013–2014	Female	Male	TOTAL	Female ALFA	Male ALFA	TOTAL
Grade 1						
Grade 2						
Grade 3						
Grade 4						
Grade 5						
Grade 6						
Grade 7						
Grade 8						
SUB TOTAL						
Total						

2014–2015	SEMESTER ONE			SEMESTER TWO			YEARLY TOTAL
	ALFA Female	ALFA Male	TOTAL	ALFA female	ALFA male	TOTAL	
Grade 1							
Grade 2							
Grade 3							
Grade 4							
Grade 5							
Grade 6							
Grade 7							
Grade 8							
SUB TOTAL							
Total							

DROPOUTS (the number of students who did not sit end of first semester tests)

2012–13	Total Female	Total Male	TOTAL	Female ALFA	Male ALFA	TOTAL
Grade 1						
Grade 2						

Grade 3						
Grade 4						
Grade 5						
Grade 6						
Grade 7						
Grade 8						
SUB TOTAL						
Total						

2014–2015	Female	Male	TOTAL	Female ALFA	Male ALFA	TOTAL
Grade 1						
Grade 2						
Grade 3						
Grade 4						
Grade 5						
Grade 6						
Grade 7						
Grade 8						
SUB TOTAL						
Total						

2015–2016	Female	Male	TOTAL	Female ALFA	Male ALFA	TOTAL
Grade 1						
Grade 2						
Grade 3						
Grade 4						
Grade 5						
Grade 6						
Grade 7						
Grade 8						
SUB TOTAL						
Total						

**APPENDIX IVA ANALYTICAL WRITE-UP TEMPLATE FOR INTERVIEWS & COMPOSITE SCHOOL
OBSERVATION REPORT**

File name: _____

Date:		Time:	
School: (use pseudonym)		Location of interview:	
Interviewer(s):		Interpreter(s):	
Person(s) interviewed:		Languages used in interview: (tick ✓ relevant languages)	Amharic Sidamigna Siltigna
Interview recorded:	YES/NO	Interview transcribed: (or to be transcribed)	YES/NO

ANALYTICAL THEMES		MAIN POINTS <i>(bulleted, in note form)</i>	QUOTES/RESEARCHER COMMENTS
SELF-HELP GROUPS			
Selection	Mothers & Children		
	Selection of committee members		
Training	Woreda-level		
	In SHG meetings		
Meetings	Procedures		
	Social relations		
Finance	Seed money & saving		
	Profits & spending		
Educating children	Attitudes to education		
	Family educational history		
Mothers' experiences	Positive		
	Negative		
Criteria for sustainability			
Other SHGs & savings groups	Traditional		
	Government		
	NGO		
Other comments on SHGs			
ALFA GRADUATE EXPERIENCES		For all these sub-categories, note the positive experiences first (+), then the negative (–), then comments that appear neither positive nor negative (n)	
Pre-ALFA class			
In ALFA class	Physical environment		
	Resources		
	Facilitator		

	Professionalism		
	Pedagogy		
	Facilitator– student relations		
	Student-student relations		
	Other comments on ALFA		
Transition experiences of students			
Link/gvt schools	Physical environment		
	Resources		
	Teacher Professionalism		
	Pedagogy		
	Teacher–student relations		
	Student-student relations		
	School management		
	Other:		
Family experiences of students	Financial		
	Social		
Community factors affecting access, retention & learning outcomes			
Other comments on link schools			
GENERAL OPERATIONAL ISSUES			
Relations between IP, gvt and ALFA programme participants			
Facilitator issues			
CM issues			
TO issues			
Other general comments			

APPENDIX IVB SUMMARY OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS (with sample partial write-up)

School: (use pseudonym)		Arishi		Dates:		Dec 2015 & March 2016	
Grades:		5		Classes:		A & B	
Lesson duration: (xmin–ymin)		25–45 min		Subjects:		Maths (L2 & 3) English (L1 & 4)	
Topics:		Maths fractions x 2 English: (L1) telling the time (L4) future		Teachers (F/M):		Male x4	
No of sts Present:	F:	M:	T:	No of sts register:	F:	M:	T:
1.	15	19	34		19	29	48
2.	11	7	18		20	29	49
3.	21	24	45		19	29	48
4.	7	12	19		31	15	46
Student attendance (Write a couple of sentences summarising student attendance & gender ratios)							
Observed class sizes ranged considerably from 18–45 (F: 7–21; M: 7–24), with more boys than girls in three of the four classes.							
Estimated percentage of overage sts in class: (Generalise for the four classes)				<u>Under 25%; 25-50%; 50–70%; over 70%</u> In both lessons of one class under a quarter of students present appeared to be overage whereas between a quarter and a half appeared to be overage in the two lessons of the other class. It is likely percentages were higher as the older students were more likely to be absent.			

Summarise the four lessons in a couple of sentences for each category

Classrooms (Location? size? condition? Chalkboard – size, position & condition? Furniture amount & condition? Windows & light? wall charts?):
One classroom had two chalkboards with one in fair condition but three of the rooms had damaged chalkboards. The classroom with two boards had recently been repaired and was relatively clean but the other three had broken windows, two had doors missing. There was broken furniture in the corner of three of the rooms. No wall charts or visual aids were on the walls.
Seating (Adequate seating & desks; inadequate seating & desks; students on the floor):
Seating was adequate in all four lessons for the number of registered sts
Student grouping (According to gender, age or other social groups? Who sits at the front, back & sides?):
In all four lessons students were grouped 1-5, generally with girls and boys sitting on opposing benches in the same group. In one or two exceptions there were tables of single-sex groupings.

Resources (*Exercise books, textbooks and other materials such as pencils, bags*)

In all four lessons almost all or most students had exercise books and pencils with them. However, there were fewer textbooks in evidence: in one class most had textbooks for Maths and some had for English but in the other class, few students had textbooks for either subject – only two out of the 19 students had Maths books.

TEACHER ACTIVITY – summarise the four lessons in a couple of sentences for each category

MOI used in the lesson: (<i>Amharic, English, Sidamu Afoo, Siltigna</i>)	The MOI varied across the lessons: English was the only MOI in one English lesson but the other English lesson was taught using Amharic and some Sidamu Afoo. One Maths lesson was also mainly taught in English but also using some Amharic and Sidama Afoo, whereas the other class' Maths lesson was wholly taught in Sidamu Afoo.
Teaching activities:	Both Maths lessons mainly involved the teacher writing questions on the board and inviting individual students to the board to work out the answer. Then the teacher got students to copy and answer questions in their exercise books. All four lessons involved a lot of choral repetition. Both English lessons involved a lot of lecturing in English, with some translation, and asked some individual students to do some boardwork or answer questions.
Level of difficulty of the lesson for most students:	Both Maths lessons were about the right level, but one English lesson was too difficult – sts were telling each other they didn't understand but nobody asked T for clarification – in the other it was hard to tell.
Structure of the lesson:	All four lessons were average in their structure In one class T didn't manage to finish & said would complete the next day.
Teacher position in the classroom:	In all four lessons the teacher was mainly at the front but in one lesson he moved around some of the time.
Teacher audibility:	All teachers were audible
Teacher tone mainly:	<i>Intimidating and/or dismissive; neutral; supportive</i>
Explanation of concepts	The Maths teacher who wandered around was also supportive. The other three teachers were neutral in tone In three of the lessons concepts were clearly explained, but in the fourth lesson (English lesson mainly delivered in English) they were not clearly explained.
Amount of teacher talk:	In one lesson it was mainly a teacher monologue, the other three lessons were dominated by teacher talk and some choral repetition and some individual interactions.

Types of questions:	All closed Qs in Maths, mainly closed Qs in English but some open Qs in one lesson.
Questions: Questions were usually asked by:	There was a lot of choral response and sts were allowed to shout out in three of the four lessons, but where there were individual Qs they were asked by pointing to individual sts.
Questions were mainly directed to:	Individual Qs were asked to both Gs & Bs in three of the lessons, and the T in one lesson invited Gs in particular to participate. Both young and old students had Qs directed to them and sts at the front and
Feedback to students:	In all classes the T corrected answers (sometimes x2; often x2) some peer correction in 3 lessons) Some books correcting exercises in one Maths lessons (some of the books then answers on the board) Sometimes t responded to St contributions
Use of chalkboard:	In all four lessons the writing was legible on the board (though the board was usually not in good condition but the grouping of sts made it difficult (on benches) to see the board.
Use of teaching aids:	In three of the lessons the chalkboard was used interactively but not in the fourth lesson. No other visual aids were used. Textbooks were used in one lesson.
Discipline:	No extreme disciplinary actions witnessed;
Teacher response to student bullying, discrimination:	n/a
Classroom management:	No sts were moved in any lesson but sts were asked to discuss answers in their groups in one of the Maths lessons.
Other comments: Quotes or critical incidents	

STUDENT– TEACHER INTERACTION

Summarise the four lessons in a couple of sentences for each category

Student-teacher interaction was generally:	<i>positive; cooperative; silent; uncooperative. Give examples:</i>
	<i>Girls; boys; both. Younger students; older students; both.</i>

Student oral participation was mainly:	<i>Students at the front/at the back/a mix. Very little student participation</i>
Student behaviour was:	<i>Very good; generally good; some messing around; poor</i>
	<i>If poor, which students misbehaved and how?</i>
Did students have opportunities to ask the teacher questions?	<i>Often; sometimes; not at all</i>
	<i>Which students (if any) asked questions?</i>
Other comments:	

STUDENT-STUDENT INTERACTION

General class atmosphere among students:	<i>Good; neutral; poor; difficult to tell</i>
Interactions between older and younger students:	<i>Give examples, if applicable:</i>
Interactions between female and male students:	<i>Give examples, if applicable:</i>
Teasing, bullying:	<i>Give examples, if applicable:</i>
Student interruptions:	<i>Do any students interrupt others in class? Who interrupts whom?)</i>
	<i>n/a</i>
Other comments:	<i>Some sts seemed inattentive or lacking in understanding in some parts of all four lessons</i>

SEATING PLANS

Summarise the seating plans in a couple of sentences.

APPENDIX VA Research Brief FOR PARTICIPANTS

Study on ALFA graduates' experiences and mothers' self-help groups

Since 2011 an Accelerated Learning for Africa (ALFA) programme has been implemented in many schools and communities in SNNPR. The programme aims to support the reintegration of children who have never been to school, or who have dropped out of school, back into public education after ten months of accelerated learning. The project also includes an early childhood scheme and a self-help micro-finance initiative for mothers whose children have been selected to participate in the project. Through training in micro-finance and the provision of seed money, the aim is to enable them to generate income that in turn can help to support their children's continuing education.

Research collaboration

As the scheme continues to expand, it is important that all stakeholders continue to learn from its various successes and challenges so that it can continue to improve the educational opportunities of out-of-school children in Ethiopia. For this purpose the School of Education and Training at Hawassa University and the Centre for International Education at the University of Sussex (from the UK) are collaborating on a two-year research project on the ALFA programme in SNNPR. This research is independent of the project and has four distinct but interrelated elements:

- A longitudinal household survey. The main focus of the quantitative element of the research project is to track children who attended ALFA schools and their families to measure the impacts of the project on primary school completion, learning outcomes and poverty. The objective is to track learning outcomes and school attendance of children from the time they completed the ALFA programme, irrespective of whether they are in school or have dropped out.
- A study of the interaction between accelerated learning classes and the government schools where ALFA graduates continue their education, culminating in action research with teachers to learn about their classroom pedagogies and practices, aimed at helping them to reflect on and improve their teaching.
- An exploration of ALFA graduates' experiences of both the ALFA programme and government link schools, and factors that help or hinder their continued participation in formal education.
- An exploration of mothers' self-help groups (SHGs) – how they work, participants' experiences, and their relationship with supporting children's education.

Research design

This research brief describes the studies on the last two elements: the SHGs and the ALFA graduates' experiences. These studies will be carried out within the 2015–2016 academic year in a small number of government link schools and communities across three woredas and will primarily be qualitative. The study will therefore involve observing in detail what is going on, talking to people about their experiences and views on various issues related to the programme, and looking at documentary data – reports, class registers, and exercise or account books – in order to understand the programme's complexities and the various successes, challenges and difficulties in different contexts.

Mothers' self-help groups

The SHG study will involve:

- Interviewing SHG participants as well as local government, community and NGO workers involved in the programme;
- Observing training and meetings;
- Looking at relevant documentary data, e.g. reports, accounts, training manuals.

ALFA graduates' experiences

This study will involve:

- Interviewing ALFA graduates (both those who are still in school and those who have left) about their experiences of schooling and the challenges they face in pursuing their education;
- Looking at ALFA students' school work
- Observing life in schools both inside and outside class;
- Interviewing head teachers and teachers about their management and teaching experiences in relation to the ALFA programme;
- Interviewing local government, community and NGO workers involved in the programme;
- Looking at relevant documentary data, e.g. reports, registers, exercise books etc.

Consent and confidentiality

It is important to understand that your participation, as an individual or institution, is voluntary. If at any time you, or other members of your organisation or office, do not wish to participate any further in the research, you may withdraw from the study without consequence. Any information you share with the research team will be treated as confidential and will be reported anonymously – in other words your name will not be identified with any information you choose to share with us.

Whenever possible we would like to record the interviews we conduct and occasionally make video recordings in schools and classrooms, or of training sessions. These recordings would allow the interviewer/observer to concentrate more fully on what is being said and what is going on at the time; more accurate notes could then be made later from the recordings. Nobody outside the research team would hear these recordings or see the videos/photos. However, if you do not wish to be recorded or filmed at any time, please let the researcher know.

Research team and contact details

The research is being conducted by a team from the Centre for International Education, at the University of Sussex in the UK, led by Professor Kwame Akyeampong. They are collaborating with the School of Education and Training at Hawassa University, led by Professor Tesfaye Semela and co-ordinated by Ms Rahel Abraham, Head of the School of Education and Training, Hawassa University. The research is funded by the US-based Geneva Global Performance Philanthropy

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CONSENT FORM FOR HEADTEACHERS / IP OFFICERS

PROJECT TITLE: Improving Access to Education in Ethiopia

Project Approval Reference: ER/BOZ20/1

I agree for my school to participate in the above University of Sussex / Hawassa University research project. I have had the project explained to me and I have read and understood the Information Sheet. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing for:

- Pupils' participation in the classroom to be observed by members of the research team and recorded on video, audio and photograph.
- Pupils to be interviewed by the research team and for the interview to be recorded
- myself to be interviewed by the research team and for the interview to be recorded.
- teaching materials and records to be photographed

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that I disclose will lead to the identification of any individual in the reports on the project, either by the researcher or by any other party.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential.

Name: _____

Signature _____

Date: _____